SKETCHES OF CHARACTER,

OR

SPECIMENS OF REAL LIFE.

A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

" Fictions, to please, must wear the face of Truth."
Qui capit ille facit.

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SKETCHES OF CHARACTER,

OR

SPECIMENS OF REAL LIFE.

THE ELOPEMENT — A CONSULTATION.

"FOOLISH Anna! — O, foolish girl!" were the first sounds which saluted the ears of Lady Aucherly, as she approached the young ladies' room. It was Miss Simmons's voice, almost choaked with agitation.

"Good G-d!" repeated Lady Aucherly as she entered, "what's the matter?"

Miss Simmons was leaning her face on both hands: her sisters were sobbing out, "Oh, ma'am, I don't know what *you'll* say."

Lady Aucherly took up the note which lay on the table. It was from Mr. Sim-

mons, requesting to see his daughter, and briefly stating that he had just received, by a chaise boy, a letter from Anna, who signed herself *Crawley*.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Lady Aucherly, "the apothecary's son! — this is a stab to every one of you: but you had better go at once to your father — I'll order the carriage directly."

"No, thank you, ma'am," said Miss Simmons — "'twould be loss of time — we had better walk; Phœbe, pray reach me my veil — I'm such a figure."

"Who could have thought," said Phœbe, rising, "that there was any thing in it."

"What *will* become of us," exclaimed Miss Simmons.

"It will be a lesson," said Lady Aucherly, "not to be too condescending to persons of an inferior rank — did you ever see them much together?"

"Oh, no," said Phœbe, "only once, I thought when he brought something for my father, Anna staid alone with him in the parlour."

"And

"And we have met them once or twice walking together," added Mary.

Miss Simmons being now ready, she set out with her sisters to the South-Parade, and Lady Aucherly returned to the drawing-room, to relate the mortifying news to her sister.

"Indeed," said Mrs. St. Clair, "I think you have more than christian patience with these nieces: I positively could not endure them above a day."

"It's almost too much for me, Sophia," returned Lady Aucherly, "you don't know half the trials I have to combat — would you believe it, 'twas given out, that my coming to Bath, was merely to *fashionize* these girls!"

"And to marry them off — if you could get the young men to be so good-natured, as Mrs. Phipps said; but she *feared* you would not find them so accommodating — for it wasn't the fashion to be obliging in that way."

"Oh, yes," returned Lady Aucherly, laughing, "I've no doubt, I'm pointed at

as a match-maker — a schemer — my house regarded as a matrimonial trap — every civility as a snare — every invitation as a bait — it's really ridiculous — Lethbridge too, must think it witty to hoax old Galbraith with a story of my having the care of nine orphan young ladies, who pay handsomely for their board, and are entitled to the use of my carriage — and then, because Martha, in spite of Brickman's art, has all the appearance of wearing cramm'd pockets, he must beg to share the *prog* he presumed she carried about with her — and this too, before that military gang, at Mrs. Macmaurice's."

"And of course, poor Martha had to look stupid, and as if she didn't understand him, or did she think proper to vindicate herself, at the expence of her person, from a charge which no one credited?"

"She preferred the latter course, and tittered out 'oh sir, 'tisn't the fashion to wear pockets now,' — she hadn't the wit to keep her own counsel, or to parry the attack by repartee."

"None of them are over-smart, in that way."

"They are quick enough among themselves, but are completely awed in company; after a gentleman has said a few civil things, the conversation flags—and having received the full complement of acquiescent monosyllables, enlivened by an occasional '*certainly*,' and '*so I think*,' he perceives the burthen of the dialogue is to fall on him, and takes an early opportunity of breaking off, with '*God bless me! there's a man I've not seen this age!*"—and this *manœuvre* I saw played off, on the very clever girl that has stolen a march this morning; of which poor Sir Philip remains to this moment in happy ignorance, and I have now the pleasing task of unfolding it to him in all its horrors—but without joke, it's a mortifying affair."

"We must go and see Mr. Simmons," said the baronet, as soon as he heard the news. "Do order the carriage—you will go with me Lady Aucherly, won't you?"

"Certainly."

Miss Simmons found her father overwhelmed with grief, and had offered the best consolation in her power, when Sir Philip and Lady Aucherly entered.

"This is sad news, Mr. Simmons; but don't let it affect your spirits in this manner."

"Oh, Sir Philip," said Mr. Simmons, taking his extended hand—"this is very kind of you both—Lady Aucherly, pray take a seat."

"We are quite in the dark about this affair," said Lady Aucherly.

"Never was any thing so sudden," exclaimed Miss Simmons, solemnly.

"And to think of her being so cunning," added Phœbe, "as to say she would go home to breakfast this morning."

"Oh, I was sure," observed Mary, "there was something on her mind yesterday evening."

"Here is her letter," said Mr. Simmons, giving it to Sir Philip.

"Dated at Devizes!" cried the baronet.

"Yes, you see," continued Mr. Simmons,

mons, "they propose staying there a day or two, with a married sister of his——"

"Has the young man's father called on you to-day?" enquired Lady Aucherly.

"It is very strange he has not, for he seldom misses paying me a daily visit; it looks almost as if——"

"But it does not appear by her letter," said Sir Philip, "that Mr. Crawley was privy to it—she begs to hear from you, I observe."

"And what to write, I don't know."

"Imprudent girl!" said Lady Aucherly.

"It's hard, my good madam, upon a father—" exclaimed Mr. Simmons, his agitation choaking the rest of the sentence: "and whatever tenderness I may feel," continued he, recovering, "it shall not—ought not, to hurry me into a precipitate forgiveness. Such a step as this," added he, looking round upon his eight daughters with seriousness, "is a lesson for you all—take warning."

The young ladies sobbed.

"It is a mortifying blow," said Lady Aucherly.

"Mr. Simmons," said Sir Philip, "we had better talk over this unfortunate business a few minutes in another room."

Miss Simmons took the hint, and retired with her sisters.

The affair was then more freely discussed, and as Anna had solicited a letter, it was settled that Miss Simmons should be deputed to write to her, stating the distress her conduct had occasioned, and that though she hoped her father might in time be brought to extend his forgiveness, yet, that at present he was resolved not to see her.

A servant now entered, saying Dr. Crawley was below.

"We had better see him," said Sir Philip; "desire Mr. Crawley to walk up."

Lady Aucherly having no inclination for an introduction to the Crawley family, took the opportunity of going to the young ladies.

Mr. Crawley had been apprized of the elopement, by a letter from his son, and was now

now come to express his concern for what had happened, and to offer the best terms in his power to effect a reconciliation. He therefore stated, that as he had only two children, he should be able to provide for his son very handsomely — " It was my intention," continued Mr. Crawley, " and still, if it meets the approbation of the young lady's friends, to take him into partnership with me; but perhaps," added he, pausing —

" Mr. Simmons and I will talk over that another time," said Sir Philip: " at present, we know nothing of the young man's character or disposition — he may be dissipated — extravagant —"

" True," observed Mr. Simmons, " and I must therefore take care that my daughter's fortune be secured to her."

" Undoubtedly," said the baronet.

Mr. Crawley spoke in favour of his son, but was perfectly acquiescent in their plans, and promised to write to him, with their ideas on the subject.

As soon as the apothecary was gone, Sir

Philip and Lady Aucherly returned home; and on their way, her ladyship observed that Bath would now be very unpleasant for them.

"It can't be help'd," said Sir Philip.

"But the young ladies certainly can't stay here."

"Why not—they must keep at home for a fortnight, and by that time the affair will be blown over."

"I should think, it would be more adviseable for them to return home, as soon as Mr. Simmons can bear the journey."

The carriage stopt—Sir Philip hobbled into his elbow chair in the parlour, and Lady Aucherly ran up stairs to her sister.

"Oh, Sophia," said Lady Aucherly, "I've gone through *such* a scene."

"Pray tell us all about it," said Mrs. St. Clair.

"In the first place, when I came, the poor old gentleman—did you ever see him? he was once handsome they say, but now—a tall Don Quixote figure, in a pepper and salt suit, sitting in his easy chair, surrounded

by

by his eight daughters, forming such a picturesque group —"

"It must have reminded you of the concluding scene in a German play," said Miss St. Clair.

"Exactly; nothing was wanting, but a curtain to descend slowly: then they were all dissolved in tears."

"Oh! how I should have enjoyed seeing you comforting them," said Mrs. St. Clair, "but where are the happy couple — forgiveness I suppose was the order of the day?"

"No, indeed, the old gentleman was quite stern upon the occasion; and gave the girls a severe lecture; upon which they all began sobbing a most doleful concert."

"A complete *octave* of minor keys," added Maria.

"And then," continued Lady Aucherly, laughing, "it was determined that a letter should be dispatched to Mrs. *Crawley* (what a hideous name it is) — I offered to pen it, but as Miss Simmons could write a very good letter her father said, she dried up her

tears, and having fixed her eyes on the ceiling, with a long pen in her hand, for some minutes, she produced about a dozen lines — this *good letter* was then read, and as her father and Sir Philip seemed to think it a *chef d'œuvre*, it was sent to the post — though I must say I thought it a most prosing performance."

"But," said Mrs. St. Clair, after a hearty laugh, "it's really a very provoking affair."

"I should leave Bath immediately," said Lady Aucherly, "had I my own will —"

"When we get to London," said Maria, "I shall be longing to hear how this romance is to conclude — pray let us know when your nephew and niece *Crawley* are to pay you a visit."

A servant entering to enquire whether they were ready for dinner, reminded Lady Aucherly that it was considerably past their usual hour.

"My dear Sophia," exclaimed her ladyship, "why did you wait for us — let us have dinner directly."

"This

"This is not later than we dine in town."

"But you should not stand upon such ceremony — we might have been detained at the South-Parade till midnight for any thing you knew, and had they all chosen to have gone into hysterics, Sir Philip, I suppose, would have expected me to stay and nurse them."

"But did you find Miss Simmons actually in hysterics," enquired Miss St. Clair.

"Oh, no," said Lady Aucherly, "that was Gifford's exaggeration; though she was uttering dreadful lamentations when I came in, and had, I believe, thrown herself on the bed: but come, I hear the dinner bell; I dare say Sir Philip is already at table."

"And how does *he* relish this new connexion?" said Mrs. St. Clair.

"Oh — he only looks at the bright side of things — he is thankful it's no worse."

"That is a most accommodating way of reasoning," returned her sister, as they reached the dining room.

"My dear Mrs. St. Clair," said Sir Philip,

"I'm

" I'm quite concerned to find you have been kept without your dinner all this time; and now I am afraid you'll find every thing overdone."

" The soup," said Maria, " stands the best chance."

" You're in the right," returned Sir Philip, " pray help me to some — a very unpleasant morning's business, this —" added he, in a low voice, turning to Mrs. St. Clair.

" Indeed, Sir Philip, it gives me real concern."

Lady Aucherly gave a hint to drop the subject while the servants were in the room: during the dessert, however, it was renewed.

" The Miss Simmonses have been so conspicuous at all the public places here," said Lady Aucherly, " that this will be the town's talk —"

" A *nine* days wonder," said Maria, archly.

" That's very fair," said Sir Philip, " and one comfort is," continued he, laughing, in order to dispel the gloom that had settled

in

in Lady Aucherly's countenance, "there are but eight left to be married now."

"But Sir Philip," said Mrs. St. Clair, "joking apart, you will really find it very unpleasant to remain at Bath, you've no idea what a set of tongues there always are here — they have nothing else to do, but to pry into other people's concerns; and if they once get hold of a story like this, they so improve it, that the parties themselves would not know it; and this affair unfortunately affords such a handle to an ill-natured world, that there is no saying how it may be represented."

"Well," said Sir Philip, "then we must go back to Aucherly Park."

"That would be the height of imprudence," said Mrs. St. Clair, "my sister, I'm sure, has your health too much at heart, to suffer you to return to Aucherly Park, at this inclement season."

"My dear Sir Philip," said Lady Aucherly, with a tenderness in her voice, "I would sooner undergo every possible mortification, by remaining in Bath, than you should

should risk your health by returning to the country."

"The air of Devonshire," said Sir Philip, "has generally agreed with me in winter as well as in summer."

"What think you," cried Mrs. St. Clair, "of paying me a visit? I have a house twice as large as the one in which you last saw me, and I can accommodate you so well, that I must insist upon your acquiescence."

"You are very good, my dear madam—very kind—but a London journey, is *quite* out of the question."

"Oh don't say so," said Maria, "and you would not want for medical advice, for there are plenty of physicians in our neighbourhood."

"That's an argument against you, for I've rather a dislike to doctors."

"And to *apothecaries*," said Maria, jokingly.

"That's unlucky," said Mrs. St. Clair, "but consider, Sir Philip, you would gain a double advantage by consenting to my pro-

proposal; you would escape Bath, and have the pleasure of meeting Caroline."

Lady Aucherly caught at this, and eagerly expressed how desirous she was of seeing her daughter.

"Of seeing London, you mean, I fancy," said Sir Philip, drily.

"You have not charity enough, then," replied her ladyship, almost in tears, "to give me credit for maternal affection—I much wish to have Caroline under my own eye, for while we are lamenting the misfortune in Mr. Simmons's family, it has awakened a dread of the possibility of its happening in our own."

"Caroline shall follow us then, to Aucherly Park," said Sir Philip, "'twasn't *my* wish that she should stay so long at Mrs. Cuthbert's."

"Nor *mine*," returned her ladyship—"you know it was at *her own* desire she staid the last half year."

"I don't wonder at it," said Maria, "Mrs. Cuthbert's such a sensible, agreeable woman."

"How can Caroline come to Aucherly Park?" observed Lady Aucherly.

"Her brother can bring her," said Sir Philip.

"Oh," cried Mrs. St. Clair, "excuse me, but brothers are not the fittest travelling *chaperons* for young ladies."

"And William's much too wild to have the care of Caroline," added Maria.

"I see you are all against me," said the baronet.

"You must yield to us," said Mrs. St. Clair, "indeed, I know you will; I think I see you now, seated by a comfortable fire in my library, which is quite at your service, and ——"

"You really will not give me time to thank you."

"Only consent — and when you are settled in London, you may return thanks at your leisure."

"*Repent* at leisure," ejaculated the baronet.

"Now think, Sir Philip," pursued Mrs. St.

St. Clair, "how Caroline's eyes will sparkle when you surprise her with this visit."

"How happy 'twill make her!" cried Maria.

"I must have time to consider of all this — if we *were* to go — it wouldn't be amiss to take two or three of my nieces with us —"

"The poor girls," said Mrs. St. Clair, "would be glad enough to quit a place, where they can't shew their faces."

"I'm sure it would give me pleasure," said Lady Aucherly, "to alleviate the uncomfortableness of their situation; and their father would consider it as an act of great friendship."

"I can't make up my mind to this scheme," said Sir Philip, "and by no means can I consent to make a long stay in London — at all events, I will return to the country early in the spring."

"Well," said Mrs. St. Clair, "you shall have your own way when you get to London, and we'll leave you now to think the matter over, and to fix a day for setting out."

"I'll

"I'll let you know when tea is ready," said Lady Aucherly, as she left the room.

"The women,"—said Sir Philip, as he seated himself for a nap in his easy chair, "the women will always talk one out of one's senses — I never knew an instance in my life, but what a woman would gain her end some way or other, either by fondling — teazing—talking, or—" better not listen to them at all, thought he, getting into a doze.

"Well," said Mrs. St. Clair, laughing, "what an obstinate man we've had to deal with: upon my life, I several times despaired of success."

"It's a chance now," returned Lady Aucherly, "that he doesn't change his mind to-morrow — he is at times very positive—if he should dream of the new plantations at Aucherly Park, and fancy he sees the lilacs and laburnums in bloom, it's all over with us — but what can we do about the Miss Simmonses? I couldn't venture to hint it to Sir Philip, for fear of throwing a damp upon our scheme, but I can't think of troubling you with those girls."

"Make

"Make yourself easy on that head," said her sister, "we can accommodate you all very well."

"You've no idea," said Lady Aucherly, "of the trouble you are proposing to yourself; 'twould be a better plan to get lodgings."

"Wait till you get to London — secure one point first."

"Of course — I never aim at too much at once; you may rely, therefore, on my not throwing difficulties in the way — but if I could by any means make *him* propose taking a house, without its appearing to be my suggestion, it would be much better," added her ladyship, ringing the bell for tea.

The next morning, Lady Aucherly had the satisfaction to find Sir Philip still continued in the same compliable humour, and having with great ingenuity contrived to let him see, that it would be intruding too much on Mrs. St. Clair to burthen her with more than his own family, he said, "I have been thinking, Mrs. St. Clair, that there is no reason why we should trouble you with so many of us,

us, when we could so easily have lodgings."

Mrs. St. Clair's objections to this plan were over-ruled, and she was commissioned to engage a suitable house in her neighbourhood for one month.

This arrangement being at length made, to the satisfaction of all parties, Mrs. and Miss St. Clair set out for London; Sir Philip went to communicate the plan to Mr. Simmons, and Lady Aucherly hastened to unbosom herself to Mrs. Macmaurice.

"Well, Mrs. St. Clair is gone, but your scheme's knock'd up."

"What d'ye mean?" cried Mrs. Macmaurice, "L—d! then I suppose it's all owing to the elopement; I was coming to day to hear the rights of it—it's all over Bath—and they've made up *such* a story—Kitten-face was here just now, and *she* had got it, that all *nine* were gone off."

Lady Aucherly explained what had really happened, and concluded with the consent she had obtained from Sir Philip, to the London jaunt.

"L—d,

"L—d, how glad I am; and when d'ye go?"

"As soon as we hear from my sister; Sir Philip is now gone to the Simmonses to apprize them of it, and I must call there presently to settle which of them are to go with us."

"Ah, poor girls!—you'd better get 'em out of Bath as fast as you can—I shall be off very soon; Wortham was here yesterday, and brought me a letter from Mrs. Lethbridge; she'll be ready to go whenever I like, and I swear I'll be at Isabella's ball.—Wortham's got a month's leave; *he's* gone to London too—L—d, do you know, we're all to wear mustachios! some of 'em are in such trouble about it—poor old Warren must be content with grey ones; and as for O'Reilly," continued Mrs. Macmaurice, unconscious that Lady Aucherly was perfectly indifferent about the matter, "I tell him, he'll look all in flames—his fiery whiskers serv'd to light a cigar, and with mustachios to boot, he'll broil a beef-steak, ha ha ha—my boys reckon upon famous ones,

so

so do Quantreuille and Wilson, and L—d, we've several nice men with the regiment now that you havn't seen — pleasant, dashing fellows, that drive dog-carts, blow horns, and astonish the natives; that was the *go* all last week, and now they've got Barclay among 'em, walking, racing, sparring, and all that sort of thing — I should like you to see Uniacke — I'll tell you what he'll do; he's a famous whip — he'll jerk a shilling out of his *puppy*-cart, as Lethbridge calls it, and drive the wheel smack over it, he will upon my life."

"A most renown'd exploit!" said Lady Aucherly, laughing, "really your officers are ornaments to the service; glorious in action, splendid in attire."

"Now that's so *Miss St. Clairish!*"

"But I don't consider it impossible for a dashing officer to be a good soldier."

"L—d, they're as brave as lions, and as pleasant, good-hearted a set of fellows as ever lived. The only misfortune is, Mac makes himself disliked; — his temper gets sour'd with losses at play; then Lord Bally-

 hough's

hough's marriage was a great disappointment: if he had died without children, Mac. would have come to the title, but now there's no chance of it: his lordship has married a woman he kept, and has lots of children, and a full second course is likely to follow — so altogether, Mac.'s very irritable: then he favours one officer more than another, and that makes cabals among 'em — I'm sure *I* do all I can to pacify 'em."

"It's a great pity," said Lady Aucherly, "that there should be any disagreement in a regiment — the officers should be like brothers."

"So I tell 'em — but some of them have such fiery tempers! — a year ago, duelling was the order of the day, and at every touch and turn, they were for sporting their *Wogdons* — oh, sometimes they'll be good friends for months together, then, of a sudden, they'll break out again — and Mac. isn't always in the right; but of course, he expects Lethbridge to side with him, and that ——"

"My brother told me something of this —

but I understand they have all been for a long time, now, on very good terms."

"Ever since they came to Bristol," returned Mrs. Macmaurice; "but it can't last long — such fiery spirits!"

"You must keep the colonel away then as long as you can."

"Oh, when he gets to London, he won't be in a hurry to leave it — he never thinks of going till his money has got the start of him — that's the *etiquette*."

"More honour'd in the breach, than the observance," said Lady Aucherly: "but I wish we could devise some means to cure him of gaming — couldn't we engage him out every evening, when we get to town, and so by degrees, wean him from the constant practice of frequenting gaming tables — for there's a great deal in the habit, and having no other pursuit; but if we could —"

— "Oh," interrupted Mrs. Macmaurice, "there's no hope of it; it's rooted in him — he'll go out for an evening, and I shan't see him for two days; then he'll come home looking so haggard — and I know well enough

enough he hasn't been in bed all that time — but I never ask questions."

"I hope it won't be so bad again," said Lady Aucherly.

"I'll tell you *what* I hope will come of our going to London — Mac.'s promotion to be a major-general — I long to be a general's lady — I didn't much care for being Lady Ballyhough; and we've got as much as we want, if 'twere all spent fairly; but in a profession, one likes to be at the top."

"You stand a very good chance then."

"Aye — but we must gain this step first, and I think we shall."

"'Twill put the colonel in good humour," said Lady Aucherly.

"Oh, by the bye, you're out of his good graces," returned Mrs. Macmaurice, "L—d how could you think of asking those Dorringtons to meet us."

"That was all Sir Philip's doing."

"I know Mac. can't bear 'em — L—d I saw something was wrong, the moment he entered the room."

"We'll manage better another time," said

said Lady Aucherly, ringing the bell for her carriage.

"Are you going?"

"I'm already after my time—Sir Philip waits for me at Mr. Simmons's; I'll see you again before I leave Bath."

"I say, mind and tell Jessy not to be frightened at Collier's mustachios."

Lady Aucherly proceeded to the South Parade, where she learnt that Mr. Simmons intended to return to Hammersmith in a week; and it was then settled, that Catherine, Phœbe, and Jessy should accompany Sir Philip and Lady Aucherly to London.

As Lady Aucherly knew there would be no delay on Mrs. St. Clair's part, she took care to have every thing prepared for the journey.

Sir Philip having been in a great measure persuaded into the plan against his inclinations, was not without hopes that something would arise to prevent it's taking place; but when the morning came, and he actually saw all his clothes packed up,

up, and the carriages in waiting, he could no longer contain his dissatisfaction.

"It's very provoking!" cried he, "to be moved about in this manner—just when I had discovered the best place for my chair, so as to enjoy the light and fire without being in the air of the door—and could put my hand in one moment on the bell—and—"

In the middle of this soliloquy, Lady Auckerly informed Sir Philip that every thing was ready; and directing the servants not to go through Devizes, (where she thought it possible Sir Philip might see Mrs. Crawley, and chuse to give her his blessing by the way) they took the road to Chippenham.

CHAPTER II.

LONDON—MODERN FASHIONABLES.

THE Dowager Lady Aucherly, had been so much incensed at her daughter's marriage, that a reconciliation as before observed, had never taken place; and her resentment towards Mr. Simmons was unjustly extended to his daughters.

Pride, her ladyship's ruling passion, had been deeply wounded by the connexion: Mr. Simmons was in trade—his father had put him apprentice to Mr. Grimshaw, an opulent wholesale grocer in London; the young man being very industrious, soon became so necessary to the welfare of the concern, that he was admitted a partner to a con-

a considerable share of the profits, and when Mr. Grimshaw's son came of age, the old gentleman relinquished the business in their favor.

Mr. Simmons, now advanced to the head of a respectable and lucrative concern, began to feel his own importance; the reputation of his wealth soon gained him many friends, and by degrees introduced him into a higher circle of acquaintance, where there were many who would have been happy to have overlooked the lowness of his origin, to have provided for a portionless daughter. Mr. Simmons was personable, and Sir John and Lady Aucherly perceived too late, that he had gained Miss Aucherly's affections. They did all in their power to prevent an union taking place, but she was of age, and she asserted the right of chusing for herself, at the expense of her parents' resentment.

Mr. Simmons continued in trade for several years after his marriage, but meeting with many heavy losses, during that time, he prudently retired from business, to enjoy his

well-earned property, before farther misfortunes should have seriously injured it.

The only mark of forgiveness that was ever shewn by Sir John Aucherly, was a legacy of ten thousand pounds between his grand-children. The dowager would never hear the name of Simmons mentioned: on the other hand, Caroline was her avowed favourite, and at her particular request, had spent the Christmas holidays with her in Hanover Square.

As Caroline had been apprized of the day her mother would arrive in town, she was waiting at Mrs. St. Clair's, with anxious expectation: she listened to the sound of every carriage as it approached the house, hoping it might stop — but no, it rolled swiftly on, offering a kind of insult to her feelings. At length the sound of more than one carriage reached her ear — "it must be them!" cried Caroline, starting from her seat.

One of Sir Philip's servants arrived and confirmed her wishes — in a few minutes Caroline was in her mother's arms — in a

transport

transport of joy she clasp'd her father's neck — again embraced her mother.

Sir Philip presented her cousins to her.— Caroline had seen very little of the Miss Simmonses: about four years ago the elder ones had spent a month with Lady Aucherly, at Brighton; but since that time, she had not seen any of them. The appearance of the three, who had accompanied Lady Aucherly to London, was much in their favor; Catherine was the least personable, yet there was an air of sincerity and modesty in her countenance, that was very prepossessing, and would have been much more so, did she not sometimes appear under the disadvantage of an awkward bashfulness: Phœbe had an open good-humoured countenance, and Jessy was smiling and playful: these two were new acquaintances to Caroline.

Lady Aucherly had found Sir Philip a very troublesome companion on their journey; he grumbled at every inconvenience they met with, and even when she took pains to make him see how very comfortably they were in many respects accommodated at the inn

 where

where they slept, he still found fault; and though he could not absolutely contradict her remarks, he took care to depreciate every attention that was paid them; and when he was at a loss, he had only to use a conclusive argument, and contend, that they were not half so well accommodated as in their own house.

As they drew nearer London, however, he complained less of the trouble of travelling, and dwelt more on the pleasure of meeting his daughter. Lady Aucherly encouraged him in this; she had taken care to secure her daughter's affection by every means in her power, and she had reasons for wishing an affection for Caroline should have as strong a hold as possible over Sir Philip: she therefore witnessed the joyful interview with infinite satisfaction; for as she saw with regret her own power over Sir Philip decline, she considered that through the medium of Caroline, she might still maintain some part of her former ascendancy.

Her first object, was to overcome Sir Philip's resolution of living all the year in the

the country; and nothing, she was sure, would so much tend to effect it, as her daughter's marrying and settling in town: she dreaded therefore a speedy removal to Aucherly Park, where Caroline's beauty might attract some man of fortune in the neighbourhood; and in case her daughter should be doomed to a country life, she foresaw little chance of gaining her point.

Though Lady Aucherly's general acquaintance was very much decreased owing to her not having spent the four last winters in town, yet her connexions were such, as to secure to Caroline an introduction to persons of the first consequence. Besides the St. Clair family, Mrs. Grosvenor, and Mrs. Yorke, Lady Aucherly was intimately acquainted with the Countess of Hillingdon, who had for many years taken the lead in the fashionable world; she was possessed of a most cheerful temper, and her manners were perfectly well-bred and elegant.

Lady Hillingdon was one of those happy mortals (for there are such) to whom every thing *seems* formed to their wishes. She

had been blessed by nature with a good understanding, a good heart, and a good face — three very good things — but a better thing in the eyes of the world was still wanting — Miss Berkeley had no money; but she was one of fortune's favourites, and had scarcely been introduced in life, before Mr. Adair, a gentleman of large landed property, paid his addresses and married her.

Mr. Adair was in parliament; a great orator, and whether he was also born under a lucky planet, or whether, having united himself to Miss Berkeley, he partook of the influence of hers, or whether his eloquence in the senate on the side of the ministry were the real cause of his good fortune, cannot now be determined, yet it so happened, that he enjoyed one of the most lucrative posts in the minister's gift — this, of course, conferred on him much importance, and Mrs. Adair now commenced her fashionable career.

Owing to the expensive style in which they lived, Mr. Adair had not been able to lay by any thing for his younger children;

so that at his death, his estate devolved to his only son, charged with the widow's jointure, and moderate portions for three daughters, who were all under age.

Mr. Adair's death was considered as a severe blow to the interest of the family, yet Mrs. Adair soon recovered her spirits, and at the end of her widowhood again appeared, as the *lively, pleasant, charming, agreeable* Mrs. Adair.

Her son in the mean time had been married to Lady Charlotte Fitzhenry, a sister of the Earl of Castlehayes; this gave her increased consequence, and the world judged rightly in supposing she would not long remain a widow. She was not yet forty, and still a very fine woman; fair, and sufficiently *en-bon-point* to be in character with her happy looks.

The Earl of Hillingdon, a widower without a family, was soon observed to pay her great attentions, and in a short time she became his countess.

A brilliant establishment was now arranged. Lady Hillingdon set the fashion in

dress,

dress, furniture, and equipage; Lady Hillingdon's parties were the most splendid of the season; and while Lady Aucherly shone the brightest star for beauty in the hemisphere of fashion, Lady Hillingdon appeared as the unrivalled queen of gala balls; till Mr. and Mrs. Grosvenor returned to England from Jamaica, where they had been for some years after their marriage.

Mr. Grosvenor's income was reported to be between fifteen and twenty thousand a-year; yet there was many a shrewd merchant in the city, who knew what West-India property was, better than to conclude that Mr. Grosvenor was in the actual receipt of such a fortune.

Mr. Grosvenor was devoted to extravagance; he instantly became the purchaser of every expensive article that struck his fancy, without the slightest regard to the price, and was the first to adopt every new and expensive fashion; in short, he was continually spending money. Mrs. Grosvenor had been used to a great number of attendants in Jamaica, which had produced

a kind

a kind of indolence in her manner; she was perhaps foolishly fond of her children, and had been rather led into dissipation by Mr. Grosvenor, than from her own inclinations.

Mr. Grosvenor had brought several black servants to England, and for some time after his coming to town, two of them with white turbans and large gilt ear-rings graced the back of Mrs. Grosvenor's chariot: but these were soon obliged to give place to a pair of tall fresh-coloured men, as exactly matched as their canes and liveries.

Mrs. Grosvenor's acquaintance was at first principally among the rich West-Indians; but through Lady Aucherly's and Mrs. St.-Clair's connexions she was soon visited by all the fashionable world. Mr. Grosvenor's vanity was flattered, and the spirit of emulation now began to shew itself: he stimulated his wife to eclipse Lady Hillingdon, and as he was careless of the expense incurred, his wishes were gratified; and Mrs. Grosvenor vied with Lady Hillingdon, to the infinite satisfaction of those, who save their own pockets, yet take care

to enjoy the entertainments given by other people.

A fashionable contention continued for several winters, between Lady Hillingdon and Mrs. Grosvenor, till a third competitor entered the lists: this was Mrs. Yorke, a widow of large fortune, who resided about four miles from London; her house was spacious, and the grounds laid out with considerable taste; she commenced with a *déjeuné* in an elegant pavilion on the lawn, which was embellished with booths for refreshments, and enlivened by bands of music, and though the distance was likely to be an obstacle to her supporting crowded evening parties, yet such was the fame of the entertainments at Villa-Yorke, which were diversified with private theatricals and *al fresco* balls, that the distance was not regarded.

Lady Aucherly and Mrs. Yorke having been at Mrs. Allen's school at the same time, a degree of intimacy subsisted between them, beyond that of common acquaintance; and Lady Aucherly being desirous of calling on

her,

her, before she left town, intended devoting a morning for that purpose.

Mrs. Yorke had resided several years abroad with her husband, who had been in the diplomatic line, but upon his death, she returned to England, and being soon afterwards left an immense fortune by an uncle, with a valuable collection of paintings, she purchased a magnificent house which had been built by a nobleman, gave it the name of Villa-Yorke, and soon had the gratification of being allowed to attract a greater crowd than Lady Hillingdon; but the fact was, instead of Mrs. Yorke's out-shining her ladyship, her superiority was merely the result of a relaxation on the part of the countess, who seeing no further occasion for giving herself the trouble of such entertainments, left it for others to entertain her in their turn. Her object had certainly been to make her daughters the fashion, and she succeeded to admiration; her parties were described with more than usual exactness in the Morning Post; the *lovely* Miss Adairs, the *accomplished* Miss Adairs, nay, even the

amiable

amiable Miss Adairs had been advertised in most of the public papers, in a very judicious manner; and ill-natured people had whispered, that she had paid, in three years, upwards of two hundred pounds for advertisements; but with regard to the eldest, the expence might have been spared, as she was fortunate in captivating the young Duke of Montolieu on his return to England from Germany, where he had received his education, and had never heard of the *lovely* Miss Adair.

Lady Hillingdon's second daughter was advanced to the same rank, by her marriage with the Duke of Launceston. The youngest had been lately introduced, and as her sisters were so splendidly married, there was little doubt but that some man of high rank would court the alliance; Lady Hillingdon's further exertions, therefore, seemed no longer required; still, however, she gave elegant entertainments, and as her manners were very attractive, her company was much sought after, and Lady Aucherly was agreeably

ably surprised by a visit from her, the morning after her arrival in town.

"Lady Aucherly, by all that's wonderful—I heard you were here, but received the news as a tremendous *hoax*—for to tell you the truth," continued the countess, looking archly at the baronet, "we heard Sir Philip was grown so morose, that he had vowed never to set his foot in London again; but I was sure the world had belied him, and his good humour'd countenance sanctions my judgment."

"I am obliged for your ladyship's good opinion," returned the baronet, "yet you should not be too confident of being in the right from present appearances: for I believe you seldom see any one in your company, to whom you do not impart a share of your vivacity and cheerful temper."

"It's a very pleasant thing to be happy," said Lady Hillingdon, "and I always endeavour to make my friends so; but some people, I verily believe, prefer being miserable."

"I fancy," said Lady Aucherly, "you'd find

find very few inclin'd to be wretched, if any choice were allowed them."

"True, but what I mean, is, that instead of making the best of an unlucky accident, they endeavour to increase it: I was diverted a few evenings ago —— a lady was mentioning how badly she was afflicted with the tooth-ache; she had not slept for three nights; 'three nights!' said another lady, 'is *that* all; *I've* had it to that degree, that I've not slept for a week!' the other did not like to be out-done, and asserted 'that there never was such a martyr to the tooth-ache as *she* was; she had lost five teeth, and had seven so decayed that they ought at that moment to be extracted.' 'Good G—d!' exclaimed her friend, determined to maintain her superiority in misfortune, 'why I haven't a sound tooth in my head!'"

"What could be more ridiculous," continued Lady Hillingdon, with an involuntary exhibition of a beautiful range of teeth, "more absurd, than this humiliating kind of bragging, for they certainly appeared to derive pleasure from a publication of such

circumstances

circumstances as most people consider prudent to conceal."

"I am of your opinion," said Mrs. St. Clair, "and have often remarked, that people had rather have the credit of misfortunes they cannot avert, than be at the trouble of appearing happy, when they are really miserable."

"The fact is," observed Sir Philip, "that when they can no longer impose upon the world, they derive some consolation from its being known, what a most unfortunate person Mr. *Such-a one* is."

"It confers a sort of importance," said Lady Aucherly, "and to thousands that is a source of happiness."

"But what excessive folly it is," cried the countess.

"Ah, but you must not arraign people so severely; you should make allowances for those who have not been as fortunate as yourself."

"The world has been very busy," returned the countess, "in making me out such a favourite with the blind goddess, yet I really

I really believe I have had my share of vexations; the truth is, I never suffered them to affect my happiness, but endeavoured to extract, if possible, some advantage from them: I won't permit a trifling disappointment to ruffle my spirits, and I have so long contended against any cross accidents, that I am come off completely victorious."

"You must, however, allow," said Lady Aucherly, "you have experienced, in two or three instances, an uncommon share of good fortune."

"'Tis very true," returned the countess, "and I must own I really am very happy, but it is, in a great measure, owing to my being determined to be so; nothing would be so terrible to me as to be otherwise; and till I meet with some dreadful calamity, nothing shall persuade me to be miserable. I *will* be happy, is my motto, and I advise all my friends to adopt it."

"It's very good advice," said Sir Philip, "and I wish *my* adopting it would relieve me from the gout."

"Ah, that's a terrible thing — I don't contend

tend for its efficacy in ill health; that's quite another affair; but I find it of infinite service in common cases: last winter, you know, all the world agreed that my masquerade was nothing to Mrs. Yorke's, but I had recourse to my motto, and laugh'd at the world—I dare say, but for this charm, I should not have a moment's peace at the thought of the splendid ball Mrs. Grosvenor's to give—I'm very sorry, Sir Philip, to see you with that large shoe—has Bath been of any service to you?"

"Very little, I can assure your ladyship—indeed, I am never so well as at Aucherly Park."

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, don't talk of Aucherly Park, at this time of the year, unless you wish to turn me into a dry twig; besides, at your time of life, you ought to be as gay as the best of us; it was but a few years ago, when Sir Philip Aucherly was all life and spirits."

"But the gout, dear countess—"

"Heavens! I forgot the gout, that makes an alteration indeed, and I don't know what

to

to recommend you to get rid of it but patience and temperance—and pray, Lady Aucherly," continued the countess, "are you to be here, while you stay in town?"

"Oh, no, my sister has engaged a very good house for us in Portman Square—we have taken it for a month."

"It was Major Anstruther's," said Mrs. St. Clair.

"I know the house very well," returned Lady Hillingdon, "I have been at many pleasant parties there, and hope to see some more before this month is up."

"The short stay we make here," said Sir Philip, "will prevent our having any large party, but we shall always be happy to see your ladyship."

CHAP.

CHAPTER III.

CAROLINE AND EMILY.

AS Mrs. St. Clair concluded that since Lady Aucherly had prevailed on Sir Philip to come to town, she would be able to detain him there three or four months, she had availed herself of the latitude that was given her, and engaged a commodious and elegant ready-furnished house in Portman-Square, and made an agreement for engaging it for a longer time, in case it should be desired.

Sir Philip at first expressed disapprobation that the house was so large, but after he had been settled in it a day or two, he found every thing arranged so comfortably,

particularly in his own room, that he no longer complained about the spacious dimensions of the other apartments.

"Your sister could not have suited us better I think," said Sir Philip to Lady Aucherly, "we could not have placed the commission in better hands."

"The situation is airy," said Lady Aucherly, "which is certainly one great point, and it accommodates our family perfectly well."

"I was afraid, at first," observed Sir Philip, "that it was too large; but on second thoughts, I am glad of it, as we can now always have three or four of my nieces with us."

"When their father returns to Hammersmith," said Lady Aucherly, "I should think they would prefer being with him."

"Oh, I beg your pardon—they'd rather be here; you know," said Sir Philip, "as he's an invalid, he requires a good deal of their attention, notwithstanding he has got that excellent old housekeeper, and it will

be

be a great relief to the girls to take it by turns to come here."

Lady Aucherly thought herself one of the most unfortunate persons in the world: she felt how provoking it was, to have her wishes clogged by a superior will: remonstrance she knew, from painful experience, would be in vain, she was obliged therefore to be resigned.

"Nothing is so cheerful," continued Sir Philip, "as to have four or five smiling girls about one."

Detestable, thought Lady Aucherly.

"And here, we can accommodate them so well, and enjoy the pleasure of shewing them a little of the world."

"Don't you think your mother may take offence at noticing them so much?"

"On the contrary, I rather think she wishes me to countenance them, and that the world should know such is her desire: her conduct may in this respect appear enigmatical, but in order to appear consistent, she prefers doing them a kindness

by

by proxy, than deviate from the line of conduct she has determined to pursue."

"It would be more noble in her ladyship, to acknowledge herself in the wrong, and openly receive them as her relations."

"Granted," said Sir Philip, "and I have more than once talked with her on the subject; but she will not hear of it—in short, the mortification she felt at my sister's marriage was so poignant, that it never recurs to her mind without throwing her in considerable agitation, and she has forbidden me ever to mention the name of Simmons to her; though by distant hints she has dropt, I suspect she approves of my conduct towards my nieces."

"I suspect very few would approve of *her* conduct."

"We have all our weaknesses," returned Sir Philip, "and perhaps, we should not think so highly of ourselves, did we know the opinions which others entertain of us."

Here

Here Mrs. St. Clair called to see how they were settled in the house, and again received Sir Philip's thanks, for having executed her commission so well.

"You've not had many visitors yet, I suppose," said Mrs. St. Clair, as a carriage stopt at the door, "but here is Mrs. Grosvenor—she's all the fashion now, and of course you'll go to her masquerade."

A servant announced the lady in question, and Lady Aucherly sent for Caroline and the Miss Simmonses who were in the adjoining room.

"Upon my word, Lady Aucherly," said Mrs. Grosvenor, as the young ladies entered, "your party will be quite the pride of my room. I've been trying to muster all the beauties in the fashionable world, and I think, with your assistance, I shall have a brilliant display; but you've more nieces here, haven't you? Mrs. Lethbridge writes me that they are all with you."

Lady Aucherly was sufficiently mistress of her countenance to repress a look of vexa-

 tion,

tion, which this information had almost extorted, and surveying the party before her with a kind smile, said, " you see all that accompanied me to town."

" But the others will be here in a day or two," said Sir Philip.

" It's rather uncertain, I believe," returned her ladyship — " Catherine, my dear, you've a letter from your sister."

" She says, ma'am, it's their intention to leave Bath on Friday, though she thinks it probable they may be detained till Monday."

" Oh, then, at all events," said Sir Philip, " they will be here in time for the masquerade."

" We couldn't all go," said Lady Aucherly, with a private frown to Sir Philip.

" Oh, the more the better," cried Mrs. Grosvenor.

" And as the girls may never see such a thing again," observed Sir Philip, " 'twould be a pity for them to lose this opportunity."

" I positively will not admit her lady-

ship

ship without them," said Mrs. Grosvenor, "and you'll make a charming group in character."

"We shall not be equal to any thing very clever in that way," said Lady Aucherly, "simple characters will suit us best."

Lady Aucherly dreaded being exposed in some ridiculous scrape with the Miss Simmonses, and the mortifications at Bath were too recent not to make her shrink from appearing again in public with such a train of girls. A masquerade, however, was in this respect less objectionable than other amusements, and Sir Philip, supported by Mrs. Grosvenor, urged the point so warmly, that Lady Aucherly was at length obliged to give up the contest.

Mrs. Dorrington called on Lady Aucherly as soon as she heard of her arrival in town, and the visit had been returned, but

they did not happen to see each other till they met at Lady Camleigh's rout.

The Dorringtons were there before Lady Aucherly, and Emily was declared the unrivalled beauty of the room, but when Caroline appeared, she robbed her of half her admirers, and among the rest Mr. Ross. He had been struck with admiration at the first sight of Lady Aucherly at Bath; he had heard that Caroline was equally beautiful, and now experienced the truth of the report to its fullest extent.

The majestic height of Lady Aucherly's well proportioned figure, commanded admiration at a distance, long before you could distinguish her features — and then — her eyes rivetted you to her alone; they were of a beautiful hazel, large, yet without the appearance of staring, and she had acquired such skill in the management of them, that every look appeared natural, and in its place: she had attained to perfection in the art of making art look like nature. Her mouth too was under her peculiar care: she

had

had indeed a most beautiful and perfect set of teeth, and no one could blame her for doing all in her power to preserve them; but the care here alluded to, was her knowledge of the effect of smiles.

She was not, like many a silly, vain woman, smiling every minute to shew her teeth, and never seeming happy unless she could laugh for the same purpose; Lady Aucherly well knew, such artifices are despised by men of sense, and hardly escape the ridicule of every fop of fashion, who, though he may be guilty of the same trick himself, will not hesitate to laugh at the folly of another.

Lady Aucherly knew better than to waste smiles on every one, and it was only on particular emergencies, that she condescended to light up her face, with all the animation which eyes, lips, and teeth could give, to gain a victory over a fashionable rival. Her manners were elegant and engaging, and though she might *designedly* pass an unimportant acquaintance without speaking, yet she did it with such a graceful

ease, and with a look of so much good temper and affability, as gained her many admirers, and even those whom she thus neglected and overlooked were more inclined to impute the slight to accident or to her being near sighted, than to design; especially, as, when she found it convenient, she would make up for former deficiencies, by addressing them in a flattering strain of compliment, and with the advantage of a great flow of ready language, it made what she said appear to proceed immediately from the heart, while many blunderers in the same circumstances are so lame in their compliments that the dullest person must see through their disguise.

Lady Aucherly entered a room with a grace peculiar to herself; she played cards with an elegant ease — at the head of her table she was perhaps the least affected; her whole aim was to please: she was animated, witty, and seemed to possess some secret charm to make all her guests happy — perhaps this secret consisted, in not only endea-

vouring to make her friends pleased *with her*, but also *with themselves*.

After this description it may naturally be supposed that Lady Aucherly was looked on in every company, as a woman most insupportably affected, and though she was secretly regarded in this light, there were few who dared to avow their sentiments, and these were, in general, such creatures of both sexes, who, being themselves totally deficient in any kind of elegance either in mind or person, considered every one, who differed from their style, as affected; but by a happy accommodating behaviour, Lady Aucherly had secured herself from being openly branded with this reproachful stigma: she was sober with the grave, lively with the volatile, and sedate with the sentimental; sometimes, of course, in mixed companies, she stood a chance of appearing inconsistent; but in large parties, she assumed such a guarded behaviour, and could at all times make herself so fascinating, that very few dared publicly to utter a word to her disad-

vantage, lest it should appear as resulting from envy.

Caroline was thought to resemble her mother in person: she was not so tall, nor were her eyes so powerful, yet they were darker and betrayed more tenderness; and her whole countenance exhibited such an expression of intelligent animation and goodness of heart that was captivating in the extreme: every grace which Lady Aucherly had acquired by study, Caroline had received from nature. The varying beauties of Lady Aucherly's features commanded admiration—every look of Caroline's reached the heart.

Ross, who had before attached himself to Emily and the Miss Dorringtons, became inattentive to them, from the moment Lady Aucherly was announced. Her well remembered figure attracted his notice in the middle of a sentence—he hesitated—attempted to proceed, but as Caroline followed, his eyes were fixed upon her, and he continued to gaze on the lovely intruder, till Henrietta

Dor-

Dorrington exclaimed, "Indeed Mr. Ross, this is extremely polite! you propose a subject—we agree to listen—and because a handsome girl appears, you entirely neglect us."

Ross apologized with a very ill grace—Caroline was approaching—he rose quickly, and offered her his seat, which she accepted with an engaging smile, extending her hands to Emily and the Miss Dorringtons: an interesting conversation then passed between the young ladies, while Ross, with his arms folded, stood gazing on the youthful beauties of the blooming Caroline.

The party soon attracted notice. The beauty of the elegant Lady Aucherly was the subject of much conversation, and enquiries followed of "Have you seen her daughter?"—"where is she?"—"which is Miss Aucherly?" while groups of young men pressed on to catch a glimpse of Caroline and Emily.

"By the Laud," exclaimed Sir Cæsar Devereux, leaning over the shoulder of Lord

John

John Lennard, "they're bootiful keatures."

"I thought there was only one woman, whom you allowed to be beautiful," returned his lordship.

"Tiew, but here's vayiety: I must get a little neayer, to see the colour of their eyes."

"Upon my life, Sir Cæsar," said the Marchioness of Arrangford, "you put them out of countenance; besides making them so vain, there'll be no enduring them."

"Your ladyship's in the yight, it's vey yong to flatter young girls."

"This side of the room is quite a mob," observed the marchioness.

"And so insuffiably hot," added Sir Cæsar. "that I dare not go in another pawt, for fear of taking cold."

"The ladies' dress," said Lord John, with a satirical glance at the exposed forms of the dashing Miss Townleys, "is better calculated for the heat than ours."

"Oh, it's scandalous!" cried the marchioness,

chioness, "you see their shoulders are quite bare—and as for their ——"

"They are certainly very communicative," said his lordship.

"'Tis infamous!" continued the marchioness, "and I wonder it does not kill them; I saw them last Saturday, waiting for their carriage in the lobby at the Opera, and they shivered like aspin leaves—if their *health* doesn't suffer for it, their *characters* will:. I shan't be surprised at *any* reports I hear—and as for this Miss Aucherly and Miss O' *what's her name*, their heads will be turned."

Though all the young men declared themselves dying for love of one or the other of the two beauties, yet the superior rank of Caroline, secured her more notice. Comparisons were now made as they sat together; indeed each served as a foil to the other: for though Caroline was fair, she had hazel eyes and nut brown hair, which gave a different character to her face: Emily was certainly fairer; and her hair, which was a glossy light brown, imparted a softness to her countenance, while

her

her sparkling grey eyes, shaded with dark lashes gave it interest and animation: her figure was slight, yet her well proportioned limbs were of an elegant rotundity, and when a child, her plump little shoulder had generally peeped above her frock, and even now at times, aided by the fashionable mode of dress, this plump little shoulder seemed much inclined to make its appearance.

Caroline was conscious of, and not a little gratified with the admiration she excited, but Emily was regardless of the homage paid her charms: in the midst of the gayest scenes, her spirits were not unfrequently clouded with the mortifying thoughts of her own unimportance; and though the loss of her parents had been tenderly supplied by Mrs. Lovell, yet the singular manner in which she had been committed to her protection, and the care which had been taken to conceal from her all knowledge of her family, gave rise to various distressing conjectures; consoling herself however, with the assurance of William Aucherly's love, she endeavoured to dissipate painful reflections,

tions, and looked forwards to the realization of her dearest wishes.

Lady Aucherly perceiving her daughter so entirely engrossed by the Dorrington party, and wishing to exhibit her to greater advantage, pressèd through the crowd to call her away.

Caroline returned with her mother to the other end of the room, while every eye followed them, and Lady Aucherly triumphed in the audible marks of admiration that reached her ear.

Ross traced the elegant figure of Caroline, as she winded through the motley group; and when the company screened her from his view, he still gazed on the spot, where he had last caught a glimpse of her; and fancied he still beheld her; at length awakened from his dream, he hastened to that part of the room where Caroline really was: he beheld her in conversation with the Duchess of Montolieu, a celebrated beauty,—yet Caroline eclipsed her—he saw her addressed by several men of rank, some of whom paid her marked attention—while Ross sighed at

respectful distance, not daring to solicit an introduction.

Lovely girl! thought he, as innocent as lovely, and yet a time may come perhaps, when you may be no longer so.

While Caroline gave rise to these sentiments in the bosom of James Ross, she was the object of envy and admiration of the rest of the room. Not far from Mr. Ross sat two ladies of quality, who were warmly discussing her merits.

"She cannot be call'd a *perfect* beauty," asserted the Countess Grey and Greville.

"And I'm almost sure she's rouged," said Lady Garston.

"*That* I ascertain before I leave this house," returned the other.

"That Miss O'Connor's skin is as fair again," observed Lady Garston.

"And she's a better figure too," rejoined the countess.

"There," said Lady Garston, coaxingly, "your daughters have *completely* the advantage."

"Your ladyship's very good — and your niece,

niece, Miss Purvis, has the finest skin in the world."

"Ah, and 'tis vexing, countess, just as I had brought her out, to have all this fuss made about Miss Aucherly."

"'Tis so," said Lady Grey and Greville, with a desponding sigh—"my four daughters," continued she, getting nearer, and laying her hand on Lady Garston's by way of entreating a friendly interest, "my four daughters are almost neglected—it's *too* bad—and they have had every advantage, I'm sure, that I could give them—there's my youngest, you know she is an elegant slight figure—and she came out in the style of the Miss Townleys, but it didn't answer—it made her look too thin, and if you'll believe me, I overheard that spiteful Lady Arrangford say, my daughter look'd like a skeleton."

"Ah, my dear countess—and the young men too—I'm sure I feel for your daughters, when I hear them derided by such ill-natured comparisons as, '*bag of bones—skinned rabbits*'—but I would'nt wish to hurt your

your feelings with the ill-natured things I've heard said — the young men are so insolent and overbearing: as for the marchioness — every body knows her character."

"The men are now-a-days become so mercenary and profligate," returned the other, "they don't look for beauty in a wife — no, they expect money — money is the cry of the day — and let women be ever so beautiful, accomplished, or sensible, if they haven't fortunes, they might as well go in a nunnery — and perhaps the very money that is received with an ugly wife, goes to support the extravagance of a handsome mistress."

"'Tis very true," said Lady Garston, calmly considering herself fortunate in having no cause to make her sympathize with the countess, "and I'm sure," added she, in accents of consolation, "those girls are best off who are without fortunes, for they may be assured then that they are not deceived by the appearance of disinterested affection."

"Ah, indeed!" sighed Lady Grey and Greville.

Greville, keenly feeling where the force of the observation was inapplicable to *her* daughters, "oh, there's no such thing now, as disinterested affection — the world is quite changed — L—d how happy Lady Hillingdon looks."

"I'm sure she must be winning," said Lady Garston.

"Oh, I know it to my cost," returned the countess in a dejected tone, "I've been losing my money to her already this evening."

"What luck she has," observed Lady Garston, "I know she —."

"Luck!" cried the other cutting her short — "she *never was* unlucky."

"To think of her getting the earl!" said Lady Garston.

"To think of her marrying two of her daughters to dukes!" added the countess, raising her voice.

"Oh, 'twas beyond every thing," returned Lady Garston.

"*Her* daughters indeed!" continued the countess, "such affected things — and *such* art!

art!—Lady Hillingdon didn't give her gala-balls for nothing—and I can see, very plainly, they expect the third to marry as well; you see the Duchess of Montolieu takes her every where with her, and continually has men parties at the house: I know it ma'am; oh, you don't know half that's done."

"Ah, but the men will see through it all," said Lady Garston, "she'll defeat her purpose."

"Do look again—Lard, how she's laughing—I never saw any thing so perfectly ridiculous—now here's this Miss Aucherly coming; Lard! what airs Lady Aucherly gives herself."

"We'll see now whether her daughter's rouged," said Lady Garston.

"Oh, I'll be certain of that," returned the countess, rising and following Caroline, till she stopt to speak to Miss Dorrington, which gave her ladyship an opportunity of examining her complexion.

Mrs. Grosvenor and a party now entered. The attention of the company was attracted by

by the popular name; she was leaning on the arm of a lady whose black eyes boldly darted about the room, and who repeatedly nodded to Lady Aucherly; then pushing through the crowd, joined her ladyship, exclaiming, "Why, you look frightened to see me."

"'Tis an unexpected pleasure," returned Lady Aucherly, "I didn't think you would have been in town so soon."

"We only arrived a few hours ago: we are at my sister's, next door, for a day or two; she proposed not to come here to-night, but L—d, travelling never tires me—I like it—the Lethbridges are with us, and here they are—we came up post for Mac to attend the duke's levee to-day; you know what I mean."

Major Lethbridge met with several of his acquaintance, and among others Sir Cæsar Devereux, a whimsical young baronet of large fortune, who exclaimed on seeing the major, "Ah, Lethbeidge!" affectedly slurring the R, "I'm yejoic'd to see you."

"What

"What you're come here to stare at the fine women, Sir Cæsar?"

"Faith, I never saw so many bootiful keatures in my life."

"What think you of Mrs. Macmaurice?" said the major.

"Mrs. Macmawis! who's Mrs. Macmawis?" repeated Sir Cæsar.

"Don't you see her with Lady Aucherly, she's wife to Colonel Macmaurice of our regiment."

"Is that her!—I thought I heard you call her Mrs. Magg just now—I yecollect now, I've seen her before; they used to call her the Lady Deagoon—I knew she was militeay by her keimson sash."

"'Tis one of mine; I lent it to her."

"How steaynge!" cried Sir Cæsar, half believing him.

"Come," said the major, "let's take a turn round the room, I've not yet seen half the company."

"Ah, Lady Gawston!" said Sir Cæsar as he passed her, but without waiting for a reply,

ply, "Ah, Lady Gawston, your most obedient — how chawming Miss Pawvis looks to night."

"How ridiculous Sir Cæsar makes himself," said Lady Garston to a lady next her.

"One would really think," returned Mrs. Monckton, "that the young men were trying which could be most like a fool."

"Oh, you know," said Lady Garston, "there's a gang of them, with Sir Cæsar at their head — there's Mr. Skefton, and my Lord Effersham, and——"

Here Lady Grey and Greville, who had been a long time attentively scrutinizing Caroline's complexion, came up to Lady Garston, and seizing both her hands, exclaimed with great earnestness and visible vexation, "she is *not* rouged."

"You are sure," said Lady Garston.

"Oh, quite," replied the countess, stifling her passion, "I can't be deceived — good night, good night, I shall stay no longer."

"I haven't seen Lady Grey and Greville look so ill a long time," said Mrs. Monckton,

"Oh, poor woman!" said Lady Garston, with

with a suppressed laugh, "I'm sure I don't wonder at it—she suffers *so* much."

"Ah, I understand you," returned Mrs. Monckton, "you mean about her daughters—she has, indeed a most anxious look."

"It's well known," said Lady Garston, evidently enjoying the subject, "it destroys her rest at night."

"Ah, and such schemes," said Mrs. Monckton, "as I have been told, Lady Grey and Greville has put in practice to get them married."

"Oh, L—d, yes," returned Lady Garston, "she was always having young men home to *petits soupers*, and two or three were very nearly caught by the bait—but now, the Lady Fothergills are become a standing joke among the men: I don't think any of them will ever be married, do what she will."

"I pity poor Lady Grey and Greville from my heart," said Mrs. Monckton, "it must be a most mortifying disappointment, after having reckoned upon her daughters marrying well—and now for two of them to

know

know what *thirty* is, and another bordering upon it, and a fourth—"

"Such a scraggy piece of goods," interrupted Lady Garston, "that she will *never* go off—she's quite a *Castle Spectre*."

Here the two ladies were so worked up that their inclination to laugh could be no longer restrained, and after having enjoyed themselves for some minutes, at the expence of the Countess Grey and Greville and the four Lady Fothergills, Lady Garston recovered herself sufficiently to renew the subject with "Oh, 'twas a dreadful shock to her constitution, when her eldest came to be thirty."

"And she has never recovered it," added Mrs. Monckton, "it wears her out."

"Oh," said Lady Garston, exerting herself to the utmost to prevent smiling, "it has brought on an atrophy, ma'am; any one can see she is going fast."

"I'm sure," said Mrs. Monckton, "I'm very sorry for her. I thank God, however, I have only one daughter, and she's well married,"

"And my niece," rejoined Lady Garston, "stands a very good chance, for she has a handsome fortune."

"And that's more than half the battle," said Mrs Monckton.

The rooms were now very much thinned, and Lady Aucherly had just enquired for her carriage, when her attention was engaged, by a lady, whom she recognised to be Miss Russel, who had been at Mrs. Allen's with her.

Fashion had not so deadened emotions of friendship in her ladyship's bosom, but that she really felt happy to see her old acquaintance, and approaching her with great affability, kindly took her hand as she expressed the pleasure she felt in the unexpected meeting.

The smile which remembered friendship had lighted up in Mrs. Selwyn's face, was followed by a dejected look, while she briefly answered Lady Aucherly's kind enquiries, respecting her family, &c. and concluded with mentioning the death of her husband.

Lady Aucherly perceived the subject affected

fected her, and to divert her thoughts, enquired whether she had ever met any of their old acquaintance at Mrs. Allen's.

"I think I saw Mrs. St. Clair about a year ago, but it was at a distance, and I was in deep mourning at the time; Miss Munro is dead; I saw her frequently after I left Mrs. Allen's, she died about ten years ago."

"She had always a delicate constitution," said Lady Aucherly—"you must recollect Laura Stephens, have you ever heard what is become of her?"

"Oh, yes, I heard a melancholy story; she went to Dublin with her aunt, and was married very unhappily I believe—I could never learn the exact particulars; but she lost her husband and child in a very short time: it deprived her of her reason for several years, and I was told lately that she was with her aunt, somewhere in London."

"If I could hear where she was," said Lady Aucherly, "I should certainly call to

 see

see her — she was a lovely girl, and the sweetest temper — to whom was she married?"

"I forget the name, but her aunt is a Mrs. Milner."

"It would give me great pleasure to see her again — have you ever met Mrs. Yorke any where?"

"I have been so short a time settled in town," said Mrs. Selwyn, "that I have scarcely had an opportunity."

"Well, it so happens," returned Lady Aucherly, "that I am going to pay her a visit to-morrow — she'll be very glad to see you; do come and breakfast with me — Mrs. St. Clair and Maria are going too, we shall be a large party, and you shall make one."

Mrs. Selwyn was flattered by Lady Aucherly's manner, and agreed to the proposal.

CHAPTER IV.

VILLA-YORKE — BOND-STREET.

THE habits of life, to which Mrs. Selwyn had been accustomed, were very opposite to those of Lady Aucherly; she had resided for many years in a country town, where her husband had been engaged in a considerable manufactory. The care of a young family had been almost her only occupation, and owing to her living so much at home, she had acquired a shyness which insensibly grew upon her.

Mrs. Selwyn's family was respectable, but of that rank in society which is little acquainted with the great world; her nearest connexions however, lived in London, and after

after her husband's death, she was persuaded to settle in town herself.

Her circumstances were what she considered affluent, and she lived in a style superior to most of her acquaintance; yet she had no wish to distinguish herself above them by equipage and a display of fashion, which her friends were not enabled to support; and indeed though she lived in some degree of elegance, she was obliged to have a regard to economy in her establishment.

The father of Mrs. Selwyn was a clergyman, and had been tutor to Lord Camleigh; a great friendship had always subsisted between them, and upon Mrs. Selwyn's taking a house in town, and in the neighbourhood of Portland place, Lady Camleigh endeavoured to dispel the reserve which retirement had produced, and with this view she prevailed on Mrs. Selwyn, though much against her inclinations, to come to her rout.

Mrs. Selwyn was of a gentle, amiable disposition; tremblingly alive to kindness, and keenly feeling every slight; she was flattered by Lady Aucherly's manner, and though she half

half repented of having agreed to go with her to Mrs. Yorke's, she could not now recal her assent. She fancied Mrs. Yorke might think she pushed herself into her recollection, and at any rate she would have preferred not to run the risk of being considered an intruder.

She ordered a coach to take her to Portman-square, but as she knew persons of rank were not fond of having hacks seen at their doors she alighted at the corner, and attended by her servant, walked to the house.

A barouche and four and a chariot were driving up and down before the house, and several footmen were lounging at the door, insolently staring her out of countenance as she passed.

Mrs. Selwyn had been a good deal awed by the style of company she had met at Lady Camleigh's the preceding evening, and had often wished herself at home, but she now felt she had to undergo a more painful trial; she guessed, by seeing the carriages in waiting, that a large party was already assembled; at Lady Camleigh's, the crowd seemed to

screen her from notice; but here, she thought, I am going to enter a room, where there may be a dozen people who may chuse to stare in my face while Lady Aucherly receives me. Such thoughts were the natural consequence of her little knowledge of the world, and as she ascended the stair-case, a thundering knock at the door considerably added to her fluttered spirits.

Lady Aucherly received her very cordially, and said, as the party was so large, she had taken the liberty to order the porter to detain her carriage; before Mrs. Selwyn could recollect herself sufficiently to tell Lady Aucherly, that she must not reckon on *her* carriage, the Duchess of Montolieu and Miss Adair were announced, and the whole party so engaged Lady Aucherly's attention, that Mrs. Selwyn found it impossible to renew the subject, and sat waiting the event.

Breakfast now occupied the company; some had finished and were standing at the windows; others were still at the table,

when

when Lady Aucherly proposed ordering the carriages to the door.

At that unlucky moment, Mrs. Selwyn appeared to be the *only one* engaged at breakfast, and Miss Adair, leaning on the edge of a pier table, provokingly remarked "*the lady* has not yet finished her sandwich."

Mrs. Selwyn immediately laid down her fork.

"I beg your pardon, my dear Mrs. Selwyn," said Lady Aucherly, politely prolonging her repast.

"There's no kind of hurry," observed Mrs. St. Clair, "we have plenty of time before us."

"For my part," said the duchess, looking full in the face of the intimidated Mrs. Selwyn, "for my part, I scarcely eat any thing at breakfast; but I like to see other people enjoy themselves."

"I've quite done," said Mrs. Selwyn.

"You must keep me in countenance," returned Lady Aucherly.

This incident, however trifling, entirely overturned what little fortitude Mrs.

Selwyn had been collecting, and she now felt quite unequal to the task of confronting this company for the rest of the day.

The carriages being ready, the gentlemen were requested to hand down the ladies.

The duchess and Miss Adair drove off first; then Mrs. and Miss St. Clair, with Phœbe Simmons riding bodkin; Major Lethbridge handed her sisters and Caroline into the barouche, and then took his seat in Sir Cæsar's tandem. The other gentlemen were to go on horseback.

Lady Aucherly was returning to remind Sir Philip to send her note to Miss Simmons, and meeting the Duke of Montolieu handing Mrs. Selwyn down stairs, said, as she hastily passed them, "hand Mrs. Selwyn to her carriage, duke — I shall return immediately."

His Grace politely led Mrs. Selwyn to the door; the barouche was in waiting, with one vacant seat, to which the duke was leading Mrs. Selwyn, when Jessy who sat nearest, thoughtlessly said "will there be room for Lady Aucherly?"

Mrs.

Mrs. Selwyn drew back.

"Pray come in ma'am," said Caroline, "we can make room."

"I thank you," returned Mrs. Selwyn, "but if you'll give me leave, I'll wait till Lady Aucherly returns."

The awkward pause was almost insupportable; she felt what a relief it would have been, had she summoned courage at breakfast, to have acquainted Lady Aucherly that she had no carriage, or even had she hinted it to the duke, as he handed her down stairs, but a sort of pride mingled with timidity had kept her silent.

When Lady Aucherly returned, the duke enquired, "in whose carriage is, Mrs. —— this lady — to go?"

In one moment Lady Aucherly glanced at the truth; she had been unaccountably possessed with the idea that Mrs. Selwyn kept her carriage; she felt the unpleasant situation in which the mistake had placed her, and was a little relieved by the duke's saying, "would the lady have any objection

to

to go in the tandem? one of the gentlemen can ride.

"That will do," said Lady Aucherly, catching at the proposal, "if you have no objection Mrs. Selwyn."

"None, but displacing the gentlemen."

"Oh, my brother will be quite happy," said Lady Aucherly, hastening to the tandem, in which stood Sir Cæsar, preparing to shew his skill in driving.

"Now Majaw, you shall see my bloods caper in the most gaaceful style imaginable," said Sir Cæsar, giving his horses gentle intimations of his power, which set them prancing.

"Sir Cæsar! you're to stop," vociferated the duke.

Sir Cæsar and Major Lethbridge looked back with cross and impatient countenances.

Lady Aucherly drew near them, followed at a little distance by Mrs. Selwyn, who indistinctly heard her ladyship explaining the affair to her brother; but he did not prepare

to

to obey her ladyship's request, until Mrs. Selwyn distinguished *entreaties*, which were enforced by "*George, let me beg of you,*" — "*come now, George,*" — and "*you must,*" — her spirits sank within her, as Sir Cæsar, by turns, eyed her, and his still prancing horses.

The evident reluctance which the major had at first betrayed, was changed into politeness as soon as he fully understood the matter, and jumping out with alacrity, he gaily offered Mrs. Selwyn his seat.

"You'll take care, Sir Cæsar, how you drive," said Lady Aucherly.

"Oh, he is an excellent whip, cried the major, adding, as he handed Mrs. Selwyn to his place, "he'll shew you how gracefully his bloods can caper."

"You must play no tricks, Sir Cæsar," said Lady Aucherly, — "now George, get your horse and follow us."

Lady Aucherly afterwards considered, how much better it would have been for Jessy to have gone with Sir Cæsar, and have given the meek Mrs Selwyn a place in the barouche;

rouche; but she had been so desirous of putting a speedy termination to their embarrassment, that she had hastily adopted the Duke's proposition without considering whether a better arrangement might have been made.

"Will *you* deiv?" said Sir Cæsar, as Mrs. Selwyn seated herself.

"Oh, no, the reins are much better in your hands."

"Eh?"

"I say the reins are much better in your hands."

"Oh;" drawled Sir Cæsar.

Mrs. Selwyn scarcely knew what to make of her companion; she perceived he was not inclined to be conversible, but lest he should impute the silence to her, she endeavoured to start some subject.

"Did you speak," said Sir Cæsar.

"I was only speaking of the weather."

"Oh—yes—it's a chawming day," said he, giving his horses the whip, "you're not afeaid aw you?"

"No, sir," replied Mrs. Selwyn, "provided

vided you mind Lady Aucherly's injunctions."

"Eh?"

"Not in the least, if you'll let your horses go quietly."

"Which of my hawses do you like best?"

"The grey, I think."

"The giey! then you don't like Bewtus, he's *my* faveyet."

"Then Brutus shall be *my* favourite too," said Mrs. Selwyn, beginning to appreciate the baronet's character.

"I knew you'd change your mind—I gave Lawd John a hundred guineas for him—you know Lawd John Lennawd."

"I have not that pleasure,"

"What not know Lawd John Lennawd!—you quite surpeise me—he's a son of the Duke of of Ulverstone."

"I have a very small acquaintance."

"Eh?"

"My acquaintance is very limited."

"Eh?"

"I'm afraid you're a little deaf, Sir Cæsar."

"Eh,

"Eh, no, I'm not—what made you think so—it's veye yude, and if you say so again,—I've a gaate mind to put you out, and make you walk."

"I'll trust to your politeness, Sir Cæsar," said Mrs. Selwyn, laughing at his oddity.

"You would'nt have faw to walk," returned the baronet, "we're almost come."

The freshness of the day had enlivened the whole party, and they were in high spirits, when they arrived at Villa-Yorke, where they were received in an elegant lounging-room.

Lady Aucherly taking Mrs. Selwyn by the hand, presented her to Mrs. Yorke, as her old acquaintance.

Mrs. Yorke was astonished at the alteration which time had made; she positively should not have known her, and expressed herself extremely happy to see her, but without looking so, or taking any more notice of her during the visit, than as if she had been the humble friend of one of her guests.

Lady Aucherly felt somewhat hurt at the manner in which Mrs. Yorke thought proper

to

to receive Mrs. Selwyn, and observed, that she had met her the evening before at Lady Camleigh's and instantly recognized her. "Mrs. Selwyn," continued Lady Aucherly, "has told me a melancholy story of Laura Stephens."

"*Laura Stephens!*" cried Mrs. Yorke, staring at Mrs. Selwyn.

"You surely must recollect," said Lady Aucherly.

"Oh, aye, a Miss Stephens—I know now, whom you mean; but really it's almost impossible to recollect every person one has seen in the course of one's life—Laura Stephens—aye; what of *her*?"

"She had the misfortune to lose her husband and child," said Mrs. Selwyn, "and she became deranged for two or three years."

"How shocking!" said Miss Adair.

"Dreadful!" exclaimed the Duchess of Montolieu.

"And I heard," continued Mrs. Selywn, "she and her aunt were obliged to let lodgings."

"Dreadful!" repeated the duchess.

"Oh,

"Oh, if she's in distress," said Mrs. Yorke, "my purse is quite at your service."

"We do not know where she is," replied Mrs. Selwyn, "but I apprehend, when Mrs. Milner condescended to let lodgings, it was more by way of augmenting her income, than as her sole dependance; I believe she has a small annuity to live on; but I fear her niece is entirely indebted to her for support."

"Ah, I'm sure I'm very sorry for her," said Mrs. Yorke.

"What a lovely girl she was," observed Lady Aucherly.

"Oh, we were *all* beauties at Mrs. Allen's," returned Mrs. Yorke.

"And what uncommonly fine light hair she had," said Mrs. St. Clair.

"Now I recollect," cried Mrs. Yorke, "I used to envy her hair, but," added she, laughing, "I wouldn't give more for it now, than the price of a good hair cap."

Miss Yorke, who had not yet appeared, was now enquired for, "I left Harriot in her dressing room," said Mrs. Yorke,—"she will

will be here immediately," then, speaking to a servant, "let Miss Yorke know we are here."

"Your youngest daughter is still abroad, I think," said Lady Aucherly.

"Yes, Arabella is with her brother in Germany."

"Does she make minutes of her tour?" enquired Miss St. Clair.

"She writes me a letter from every place she visits."

"They must be very amusing."

"She has great advantages in travelling with Charles," said Mrs. Yorke, "he points out to her every thing deserving observation —I'll shew you some of her letters one of these days."

Here Miss Yorke was heard running down stairs, laughing, with a pretty young creature, who entered leaning on her arm, and making a half courtesy to the company, immediately entered into conversation with Lord Frederick St. Clair.

Miss Yorke surveyed the party as she entered with a fashionable impudence, and with

with a lofty voice, had something to say to every one as she passed by to the upper end of the room, where purposely turning her back to Sir Cæsar Devereux, she began talking to Miss Adair.

"Aw you affronted, Hawyet?" said Sir Cæsar, leaning on the back of her chair.

"Don't keep boring so," cried Miss Yorke.

"You'e veye cuel," said the baronet mournfully.

"You are very presuming, sir."

"Now you don't look so handsome as usual," said he.

"Nor you so stupid."

Lady Aucherly enquired who the young lady was, in conversation with Lord Frederick.

"Don't you know the little widow!" said Mrs. Yorke; "I'll introduce you—Constantia, come hither."

The little widow came forwards with infantine grace, and was presented to Lady Aucherly as the Countess of Windermere.

Some of the party proposed a stroll about the grounds. "It's too early to see the place to advantage," said Mrs. Yorke— "Repton has done wonders, but at this time of the year, the imagination must supply a great deal—Lord Frederick, I'll thank you to open that window and let us pass."

"Oh, it's very damp," said the countess, in a childish accent, as they crossed the lawn and putting up her little foot to shew the sole of her buff kid slipper, "*indeed* it's very damp—pity it is, the frost is broken up."

"Oh, we shall have no more skaiting," said Miss Yorke, "I must take lessons over again— Devereux, give me your arm."

"Now, you look bootiful."

"And you agreeable," returned Miss Yorke.

"You're an angel," said he, "and if you weren't mistiess of my hawt already ——"

"Pooh, nonsense! now you begin to bore

bore again," said Miss Yorke, as they re-entered the house.

The paintings were now noticed.

"That's a Loutherberg, I think," said Miss St. Clair, pointing to a land storm.

"The feighten'd hawses are excellent," cried Sir Cæsar.

"It's reckoned a very good painting," said Mrs. Yorke, "and here is a Moreland, which has been much admired."

"I prefer the ancient school," said Sir Cæsar, still gazing on the storm, "when the painter's no more, he lives in his works."

"You're very fine," said Miss Yorke, contemptuously.

"And kindly sending poor Loutherberg into the other world," added Maria.

"What, isn't he dead then!" cried Sir Cæsar, "Oh no, now I yecollect—'twas Haydn I was thinking of."

"I thought so," returned Miss Yorke.

"As you are so fond of the ancient school, Sir Cæsar," said the Countess of Winder-

mere, "what do you think of the Madona over the door?"

"Pooh, Constantia, you know I've often admired Hawyet's Madona."

"Then look here, Sir Cæsar," cried Miss Yorke.

"No, Sir Cæsar must examine this fine *Rembrandt*," said Lord Frederick.

"Don't let them quiz you so," said Mrs. Yorke—"the paintings are all modern in this room — come, let me shew the way to something better worth seeing."

"Allow us to admire this head a few minutes longer," said Lady Aucherly.

"It's beautifully done," observed Caroline.

"Didn't it take you a great while in finishing?" enquired the duchess.

"Oh no," replied Miss Yorke, *carelessly*.

"*Only three days*, I assure you," said her friend the countess — "I was with her the whole time."

Mrs. Yorke now opened the door of a spacious apartment, adorned with some of the choicest specimens of the Italian, Flemish,

mish, and Dutch schools; they were highly varnished, and in the most superb frames.

Caroline and Maria were much struck with a Claude, and Mr. Jones, a friend of the duke's and a *connoisseur*, observing a nice discrimination in their remarks, accompanied them round the room, and pointed out the merits, peculiarities, and defects of the different masters.

"These are all originals," observed Mrs. Yorke, "but there are some large historical pieces in the saloon, which are considered the best in the collection."

"History painting is certainly the very summit of the art," said Mr. Jones, "there is so much skill required in the disposition of the figures, the attitudes, and in delineating the passions."

"You'll find some exquisite touches of nature in a Raphael," said Mrs. Yorke, proceeding to the saloon,

"There's your great namesake, Sir Cæsar," cried Miss St. Clair, "expiring at the foot of Pompey's statue — don't you envy him?"

"Sir

"Sir Cæsar had rather remain in *statu quo*," said Major Lethbridge.

"Mr. Jones, there's Raphael's Holy Family," said Mrs. Yorke — "the painting I was speaking of."

Mr. Jones surveyed it a long time before he gave his approbation, and then pronounced it a very fine painting.

"Faith so it is," said Major Lethbridge, "but *here* are the touches of nature," added he, eyeing a cold collation — "that tongue really looks as if it could be eaten."

"And the fruit," cried Miss St. Clair, "bears indisputable marks of a great master."

"The pine is quite a *picture!*" continued the major.

"And as you're a man of taste," said Mrs. Yorke, "pray try it and give us your opinion."

The morning was now far advanced, but as it was perceived, by several hints dropt by the little countess, that there was still one more room to be seen, *if* Miss Yorke could be prevailed on to permit it, curiosity

 and

and politeness urged them to overcome her scruples, and notwithstanding her repeatedly declaring she would hear of no such thing; that it would not repay them for their trouble, and reprimanding the countess as often as she encouraged them to persist, the party at length forced their way into the *boudoir*, where an ostentatious display was exhibited of Miss Yorke's performances, from large heads, down to the minute butterfly.

A work-table painted in imitation of marble, ornaments in imitation of bronze, skreens, work-baskets, &c. &c. called for every expression of praise, which the company could recollect or invent, and "how beautiful!" "how elegant!" "what taste!" "how classically designed!" echoed from all sides.

The work in hand was a white velvet sultane which Miss Yorke was painting to represent a bed of red and white roses; and had time permitted, the contents of a large port-folio, which the countess produced, would have been exhibited.

The party then returned home: Lady

Aucherly

Aucherly took care that Mrs. Selwyn should be accommodated in the barouche, and Sir Cæsar had the honour of driving Miss St. Clair.

As they came near town, the firing of the Park guns and bell-ringing announced some great rejoicing; and as they approached Hyde-Park Corner, a gentleman rode swiftly by them exclaiming, "*famous news!*" and "*can't stop to tell,*" wafted over their heads.

"Where the devil can Skefton be going!" cried Sir Cæsar, standing up to look after him. "G—d, how well that man ties his cravat!" continued he, as he re-seated himself; "I'd give fifty guineas if I —"

"What can this news be!" said Miss St. Clair.

"Oh, I wawant," replied he, "some of our naval heeyoes have been thieshing the Fienchmen."

Maria was more anxious to learn what the news was than she chose to express, and when they stopt in Harley-street, she requested Sir Cæsar to bring the best informa-

tion he could to Lady Aucherly's, where the whole party was engaged to dine.

The Duchess of Montolieu, and the rest returned home, and Lady Aucherly, after setting down Mrs. Selwyn, ordered the carriage through Bond-street, and stopt at Grieve's, where the Miss Simmonses hoped to meet with some ready made shoes.

The barouche and four with two outriders attracted some notice, and as the elegant figure of Lady Aucherly appeared at the shop door, several Bond-street loungers were collected near the carriage, to observe the fair owner.

Lady Aucherly's vanity was flattered, and gracefully turning her head, repeated her orders to the shopman; then taking a survey of the street, with one foot on the step of the carriage, she beheld Miss Simmons and Sarah with a gentleman and two ladies, whose appearance bespoke them to be persons of inferior rank.

Lady Aucherly hastily flinging herself in the farthest corner of the carriage, desired Caroline to make haste in, hoping to get away

away before Miss Simmons came up; but that lady having quickened her pace as soon as she saw her sisters, reached the spot before they were seated in the carriage, and after shaking hands with them, began explaining to Lady Aucherly, that they had arrived the preceding evening at Hammersmith, and that she came to town to see Sir Philip and her ladyship: that Sir Philip had told her the purport of her ladyship's kind note, and that she and her sisters would with great pleasure accept the very kind invitation.

During this time, the greetings from the Miss Grimshaws, (the ladies with Miss Simmons) on meeting Catherine, Phœbe, and Jessy, were loud and unceasing.

"Lor love'e, well, to think of Anner!" cried Miss Maria Grimshaw, "your sisters' a been a tellin us all about it—and we're going with'em to Hammersmith, to see your pa—so we been a waiting in Piccurdilly, for one of the stages, but as there on't be one as goes off much afore a't 'a'ter four, we thought we would have a

 bit

bit of a Bond-street lounge, only this little passel of my night things don't look so well, do it?"

This was uttered with such an expression of vulgar mirth, and a chuckling laugh, that it became quite insupportable to Lady Aucherly, and interrupting Miss Simmons, she requested Phœbe to get in the carriage.—Phœbe immediately obeyed, and was assisted by Miss Grimshaw's brother, who acquitted himself with such an affected theatrical grace, that several men of fashion passing by, found it impossible to restrain their laughter.

Lady Aucherly's bosom throbbed with mortification, though her countenance did not betray it, and promising to call on Miss Simmons very soon, apologized for being in such a hurry, and ordered the coachman to drive on.

"There they goes!" cried Miss Grimshaw, as she stood looking after the carriage, "there they goes! who but they; lawk, how dashy 'tis for your sisters to ride about in that broutch and four hosses."

"And

"And two men a hossback behind 'em," added her sister.

"Lawks, Marier, did you see what Jessy had on!"

"Iss sure — 'tis some new kick, ain't it? Lards love'e Sally Simmons," continued Miss Maria, "do'e get us acquainted with Lady Archerly, when 'tis your turn to be with her."

"Oh, you know," said Miss Simmons, "'tis a great favor I assure you, that *we* are noticed by her, and we can't take the liberty of introducing our friends."

"Lawk o'me! not with your own flesh and blood aunt!" exclaimed Miss Grimshaw.

"'Tisn't her own flesh and blood aunt," returned her sister.

"Well if she bain't — is she so proud as all that!"

"Aye, I warrant her," cried Miss Maria, "she gave me a very rude stare when I curt'sied, but I sha'n't cry my eyes out if she stares again; I can give her as good as her own any day.

 "Pray

"Pray don't talk so loud," said Miss Simmons.

"Lawk!" returned Miss Grimshaw, "why 'tis all the fash among the quality: we were at Cov'n Gar'n last week—."

"And the play was—" interrupted her brother.

"Lawk, what signifies what the play was," said Miss Grimshaw, "'tweren't that; I was going to mention summut by way of proof poz; and there—."

"Lor' Hetty," exclaimed Miss Maria "that young man twitched my cloak as he pass'd by; Tom shall call him out—will'e Tom?"

"Which gen'leman was it," said her sister, "'twas like his imperence."

"Why don't'e see! 'twas he with a yollor Barceloner handkercher round his neck; p'raps 'twas his button hitch'd tho'—."

"*I* see him," said her sister, "Lawk, and there's another with a laylock handkercher—Tom must have one now I spose."

"I got a old plod'un at home," said Miss Maria, "that'll do for him—will'e have 'n Tom?"

"Don't

" 'Don't be chattering so."

" Lawk, *I will*— there now—Lor here's the two Frenchmen again — what a grimacing! d'ye hear'em *parlez vousing?*"

" What will they say to this news," observed Mr. Thomas Grimshaw. " I wonder whether we shall have an illumination."

" Tom's full of the news," said his sister Maria.

" As full as a hegg," cried Miss Grimshaw.

" I wish you wouldn't keep such a noise," said Sarah Simmons.

" Lars lov'e, Sally Simmons, I can't help it," said Miss Maria — " I can't indeed."

" Lawk!" exclaimed Miss Grimshaw, " Look at that man a riding so fast on his speckledy hoss."

" And how cruel," said Miss Simmons, " to spur the poor dumb animal so."

" 'Tis their divildom," returned Miss Grimshaw.

" Lorks!" cried Miss Maria, " I should laugh if the blood was to spirt out upon his nice leather breeches and the crame colour'd

 tops

tops to his boots — Laws, what a sight of leather breeches there always is in this street, ain't there? why there's a hundred pair here now, I do think — I say Tom, what a pity 'tis you ha'n't a got yourn."

"They bain't clean," said Miss Grimshaw.

"Do hold your tongues, can't you," said her brother.

"Lawks!" cried Miss Grimshaw, "it's hard if one mus'n't speak!"

Miss Simmons, who was anxious to get out of Bond-street, was now hastening on.

"Lors, Elizer, why d'ye walk so fast?" exclaimed Miss Maria from behind, "you found fault with me for talking so loud just now, and I'm sure it's wuss to tramp on like that."

"And more vulgerer by half," added Miss Grimshaw.

"We don't walk fast in Bond-street," said the brother.

"*We!*" repeated Miss Grimshaw, "how long have *you* been a Bond-street lounger,

you

you can only come, when you can 'scape from counter."

"Lars love'e," cried Maria, as they crossed over into Piccadilly, "I think there's a gentleman a folloring us."

"Lawks!" giggled Miss Grimshaw, looking back — "there's two of 'em," added she, turning round, while her tongue quickly flapped out and in again.

"I'll have the tall un," said Maria, "'twill be a very shuitable match, I think."

"Lawks, they'll hear us," said Miss Grimshaw.

"Upon my word," said Sarah, "I'll never walk out with you again if you go on in this manner; you make every one stare that passes."

"Well, we on't do so never no more, ou'll us?" said Miss Grimshaw — "there's the stage — Master! Master! mind four places for us — Lor, I see 'tis young Cloud's to drive."

"Oh Tom," said Maria, "if cousin Hancock calls, make my apologies for not walking out with her."

"You can tell her where we be gone," said Miss Grimshaw, "and you can 'scort her yourself."

"Shukey'll like that better p'raps!" said Maria Grimshaw, as she got in the coach.

Bond-Street had happened to be more crowded than usual, aud Lady Aucherly's pride was so keenly wounded by the bare possibility that even for a moment, the Grimshaws might be supposed to be acquaintances of hers, that she heartily wished herself safe at Aucherly Park. When the carriage drove on, she enquired who the young women were.

"The Miss Grimshaws," answered Jessy.

"'Tis very unpleasant, ma'am," said Catherine, "and Sarah told me she was ashamed to walk with them; but my father expects us to be so friendly with them, that we can't be as reserved as we could wish.—My sister came to town to see old Mr. Grimshaw, their grandfather, and afterwards called on the Miss Grimshaws, and they invited themselves for a night to our house—my

my sister couldn't refuse; but they are to go home to-morrow."

"They appeared very vulgar young women," said Lady Aucherly, "and I hope while you are with me, you will take care to avoid them, if by ill luck they should chance to come in our way."

"They are so pushing," said Phœbe, "there's no shaking off their acquaintance; they *will* be intimate in spite of all we can do."

"'Tis very provoking," returned Lady Aucherly, "when people *will not* be affronted."

"That's exactly their mother's character," cried Jessy—"she is such a fat, good humoured, vulgar creature—and will be so free—I believe nothing could persuade her that her officious civility is disagreeable in the extreme, or that her company is undesirable."

"There are such mortals," said Lady Aucherly,—"then your father arrived last night, and your sisters must have left Hammersmith before my note got there—and

and how did they come to town this morning?"

"In one of the stages, I suppose," replied Phœbe.

"In one of the stages!" exclaimed Lady Aucherly, "and by themselves!"

"Oh," said Catherine, "we think nothing of it, we are so used to it."

Persons who are totally unacquainted with the convenience of a stage-coach, may be as much surprised as Lady Aucherly was shocked, at hearing of two young ladies going in one unattended; but when people have resided for many years in a country town, where the females of the family have often found the necessity of availing themselves of a stage-coach under the protection of a chaperon, a brother, or some male friend, &c. they soon get reconciled to go alone, and begin to consider it a kind of domestic establishment; they become known to the coachman, whom they almost look upon as their own servant, and of course, a sort of protection to them; so that from habit, the Miss Simmonses, though in many respects superior to this mode of travelling, did

did not consider it by any means degrading.

Miss Simmons and Sarah left Hammersmith about twelve o'clock, and did not arrive in Portman-square till after the party had set out for Villa Yorke: after sitting for some time with Sir Philip, they went by their father's desire to see Mr. Grimshaw.

This old gentleman was upwards of eighty years of age; he had ever maintained a most respectable character, and to him Mr. Simmons was certainly indebted for his present independence.

Mr. Grimshaw's son, however, was a very opposite disposition: he was mean, selfish, and contracted in his ideas, and having married a woman of low birth and vulgar manners, their children were brought up with very illiberal educations, considering the fortunes to which they might look forwards.

The two daughters, who were now about five and twenty, had been sent to a third rate boarding school, in the neighbourhood of

of the metropolis, where they got a smattering of French, dancing, &c. but as at this school, they met with girls of a much inferior situation in life, they had acquired, by associating with them, a vulgar articulation of vulgar phrases, which being accompanied by vulgar manners, rendered the Miss Grimshaws as inferior to the Miss Simmonses, as *they* were to Lady Aucherly.

The brother too had been at some low school in the city, where he had picked up a little Latin, just sufficient to make him conceited; he was now in his father's counting-house and becoming acquainted with young men of his age, who were city beaux, Tom Grimshaw soon acquired a taste for dress; but instead of looking like a gentleman, he was oftener taken for the maker of his own cloaths.

In a very different manner had Mr. Simmons educated his daughters: he had a liberal mind and a generous heart; instead of looking out for a school where his daughters might receive superficial accomplishments at a cheap rate, he made a strict enquiry

quiry for that seminary, where the greatest attention was paid to health, morals and the improvement of the mind; and when they left school, they had the advantage of the best masters to keep up their accomplishments; but from living so much at home, the Miss Simmonses could not be expected to understand every minutiæ of modern refinement sufficiently to please Lady Aucherly.

Mr. Simmons was never above avowing that he owed his fortune to the elder Mr. Grimshaw, and always looked up to him with the utmost respect; and as he treated his son and the rest of the family with the greatest friendliness, he expected his daughters to follow his example.

The Miss Grimshaws took advantage of this, and exercised a sort of command over the Miss Simmonses; if they met with any opposition, they had only to complain to Mr. Simmons of being treated slightingly, to ensure them success in carrying any point they had in view; and the Miss Simmonses being their genteelest acquaintance, they

were

were always anxious to have some of them at their house. At first, the Miss Simmonses felt a repugnance to so much intimacy; yet they durst not shew it, well knowing the Miss Grimshaws would not fail to accuse them of pride: by degrees, the vulgarity of their city friends became less glaring, and as they went with the Grimshaws to the theatres, and other public places, and to private parties, they became more intimate with them than the difference in their manners seemed to warrant. The time, however, which they had lately spent with Lady Aucherly completely opened their eyes; what had been before scarcely observed, now struck them with double force, and they determined for the future to exert a little more self-importance, and repress the intruding familiarity of the Grimshaws.

Miss St. Clair made a hasty alteration in her dress, and hurried her mother to Portman-square, eager to hear some particulars of

of the news which had just arrived. Good God! thought Maria, while a whole nation rejoices at a triumph of, probably, inconsiderable glory, and transient advantage, how many wretched individuals are there, deploring the loss of the dearest relatives —. While these reflections occupied Maria's thoughts, Sir Cæsar made his appearance, and repressing her anxiety before her mother and Lady Aucherly, she carelessly enquired what information he had obtained.

" Oh, about the news you mean," said the baronet, " I heard all about it from a feiend of mine — Lawd Effawsham — you know Effawsham, don't you — he's coming here in the evening. I think he has the most famous pointers I ever —"

" But what intelligence have you gained?" interrupted Maria.

" Oh, aye, tieu — we've beat the Fiench fleet."

" That I have already heard — but the particulars Sir Cæsar?"

" Upon my life, I don't believe any body knows yet."

" I

"I thought," said Miss St. Clair, rather pettishly, "you had heard *all about it.*"

"Well, but one can't yecollect eveyi thing one hears—I think, Effawsham told me that we had burnt a ship of the line, taken two more, and deove off the yest."

"But who is the *hero* of the victory."

"Upon my honaw—" said Sir Cæsar, pausing, "that has escaped my yecollection—let me see—'twas Lawd—no, Admiyal—what was his name—gad I've fawgot."

"Every thing, but my Lord Effersham's pointers," cried Miss St. Clair, provoked at being unable to learn so interesting a circumstance; since from that, she might ascertain whether Charles Macmaurice had been in the engagement.

"Why what's the odds" said the baronet, "we shall hear all in good time, and it's quite enough at first, to know there is such good news."

"Sir Cæsar is inclined to husband it," said Lady Aucherly.

"By

" By way of consoling himself for the badness of his memory," returned Maria, who prudently forebore questioning the baronet any farther, and was obliged to appear content with the unsatisfactory information she had extorted from him, till the arrival of the Duke of Montolieu and other gentlemen of better memories than Sir Cæsar, when she learnt that the victorious fleet, was that with which Charles Macmaurice had sailed, and though the victory had been glorious, the loss on our side was very considerable.

To Maria the news was fraught with fear: there could be but little doubt that Charles Macmaurice had been in the engagement; she well knew his undaunted courage would expose him to the greatest dangers, and apprehensions for his safety shook her delicate frame.

She had, almost unknown to herself, cherished a tender remembrance of the interesting sailor: there was a certain meaning in his manner of addressing her, that she would fain attribute to a partiality on his

part;

part; but nothing he had said could she interpret into a certainty that he loved her — yet she indulged a hope that this might be the case — and while such were her thoughts, his elegant figure was naturally before her eyes: with delight did she recall his manly countenance, where sense was blended with good temper; with pride she dwelt on his character, which, though far from faultless, displayed an energy of soul; while an insinuating softness in his manners had gained her affections.

To the rest of the company the news gave excellent spirits, while Maria was obliged to force hers, to disguise her feelings, and as the victory of our brave tars became the general topic of conversation, she found herself compelled to join.

"I have to thank your lordship," said Maria, to Viscount Effersham, "for some of the particulars of the news to-day."

"Me!" cried his lordship, "I doesn't comperhend you — this is the first time I've had the facility of seeing you to-day."

"What you still sport your strange at-

tempt

tempt at being witty!" said Miss St. Clair, "but Sir Cæsar Devereux certainly mentioned your lordship as the source of the information he gave me — didn't you, Sir Cæsar?"

"Yes, I told you eveyi thing that Effawsham told me."

"It's quite unpossible," returned his lordship, "that he could have given you a perforate account, for he was infinitively more consarned about a brace of pointers I had with me — Sir Cæsar prefers good dogs to good news."

"I *doesn't* wonder," said Lady Hillingdon, humouring the viscount's affected phraseology, "that Sir Cæsar was so *unaccurate*, for your lordship really puzzles one to *comperhend* you — don't you think Miss St. Clair, we monopolize two of the most entertaining beings in the room?"

"Indeed it goes against my conscience in these scarce times," said Maria, "your lordship must divide your attentions — you really expose me to the envy of all my sex!"

"Now you makes me vain," cried Effersham.

"*Vainer*, you should have said, for vain you were before."

"I defies the whole world to prove me so—all as I says, is as this—"

"How yidiculous 'tis in you Effawsham," cried Sir Cæsar, "to go on in this manner; somebody will think perhaps that you don't know any better—you should consider there are seveyal steayngers here."

"Upon my life," exclaimed Lady Hillingdon, "you are *both* a great deal too ridiculous, I have humour'd you as long as I could, but I can bear it no longer."

"How have I affeunted you," said Sir Cæsar.

"By an absurd affectation—last winter you used to ring the *r*, as if there were a dozen in every word."

"Well, but isn't it greater folly in Effawsham, to think it witty to speak bad English?"

"You are equally ridiculous; besides the absurdities now adverted to, you are both egregiously

egregiously affected; but if you *must* sport singularity, take a hint from one a few years older than yourselves, and be polished gentlemen—and there are two or three friends of yours, to whom you may, if you please, communicate my advice; for surely if affectation be censured in a woman, it becomes disgustingly insupportable in a man. I would not speak my thoughts so freely," continued the countess, "but that I know you are very young men, and possess more sense than you have been willing to let the world give you credit for."

"How you talk!" cried Sir Cæsar, "L—d, there's Wortham; I didn't know *he* was here—I must go and speak to him."

"And mustn't your lordship," said Miss St. Clair, "go and speak to Mr. Wortham, or some other friend, who has been here this half hour without being seen."

"You quiz one away," cried the viscount, as he turned on his heel to follow Sir Cæsar.

Miss St. Clair, weary of the restraint which company imposed on her feelings,

 was

was glad on her return home to retire to her chamber, and meditate on the fate of him who had the entire empire over her heart.

CHAP.

CHAPTER V.

THE MORNING VISIT.

THE next day, Lady Aucherly sent her carriage for the Miss Simmonses, agreeably to the purport of her note. The Miss Grimshaws were not yet returned home, and on their seeing the barouche arrive, Miss Maria exclaimed:

"Lors lov'e, here's pleasure for all of you—*here's* a nice carriage for'e to ride in."

"I'm sure," said Miss Simmons, "if it were our own, I shouldn't think of going in it, while you go in the stage."

"Lawk o' me, never you mind that," returned Miss Grimshaw, "we'll go in one of

of the coaches as sets down in Paul's church-'ard."

"And then we sha'n't have fur to walk," added her sister.

The Miss Grimshaws waited at Mr. Simmons's garden door, by which the stages passed, and having hailed one which had two vacant seats, they were soon conveyed home, and were so full of the *pleasures* of which the Miss Simmonses were about to partake, that they could talk of nothing else.

"And there, mother," said Miss Maria, "they're going to a masquerade to-morror night; and they're to take it in turns to be with Lady Archerly while she stays in Lunnon—and there they'll go about with her—"

"And I'll be bound," cried Miss Grimshaw, "Lady Archerly will give a ball or summut."

"And 'tis a thousand pities but what we was acquainted," added her sister, "for then *we* might come in for some of it."

"And 'twould be so nat'ral," returned the

the other, "as we know the Simmonses so well."

"Vell, dears," said Mrs. Grimshaw, "and if they has such pleasures and fine acquainternces and what not, you'll have better fortins than any on 'em."

"But a bird in the hand's wuth two in the bush," cried Miss Grimshaw.

"We see Lady Archerly isterday, mother," said Maria, "and she's one of the topping ones, I can assure 'e."

Tom Grimshaw corroborated this account, adding that her ladyship was a most beautiful woman.

"She's one of the scarnful ones then," returned Miss Grimshaw; "she didn't look very gracious on us, *I* can tell 'e."

"Because you haven't called on her," said Tom.

"Laws, what should we call for!" cried Maria.

"What an absurd question!" returned her brother, "as if you didn't know, that people never know one another in the great world, till calls have passed between them."

 "Lawks

"Lawks then, that was it, as sure as a gun," observed Miss Grimshaw.

"I shouldn't wonder," said her sister.

"And why shouldn't you call," said Tom, "people of our fortune ——"

"Oh, do'e, do'e call, mother," repeated Maria.

"Of course she must," returned Tom.

"Vell now," said Mrs. Grimshaw, "and if now, Tom, I had a mind to call, vhen ought vun to go."

"The sooner the better, of course; and as her stay in town is so limited, you ought to go this morning."

"Laws, ah!" cried Maria, "and then perhaps Lady Archerly may ask us to her rout; as the Simmonses said they dare say'd she'd give one."

"And who knows," said the mother, "perhaps if I was to give a bit of a hint, she'd take 'e to the masq'rade vith her."

"Now, pray mother," said Tom, "don't you go a fishing for invitations—'twould let us down so—"

"Do leave me alone, child—as if I should

go

go bolting it out — do you think thy mother don't understand trap you ninny — I shall give a hint in a circumbendibus fashion — I *has* a compacity — "

" You know you might say," said Miss Grimshaw, " that —— "

" Teach your granny to suck heggs, Hetty," interrupted the mother — " dont'e bother so — I *think* I knows what I'm about, so you needn't put in *your* hoar."

" 'Twould be disagreeable," said Tom, " to appear as if we came begging — it had better be let alone — unless you could — "

" Thy mother's no fool Tom, leave it to my manurgement and you shall see — if you bain't a *Tom fool*, hugh! hugh! hugh!"

" Haw! haw! haw!" reiterated both her daughters.

" Hugh! hugh! hugh!" continued the mother, with her hands resting on her clumsy hips, " hugh! hugh! hugh! 'tain't the fust time I'a' made a bold push, and it can't do no harm to try — I shall put a good face on the business — and you'll see! come

 chillern,

chillern, the sooner we be dress'd the better, hugh! hugh! hugh!"

"Well, you needn't go on laughing so," said Tom, "I say mother, you must ask them to dinner, or supper, or —"

"To be sure I shall," returned Mrs. Grimshaw, "and vhat ou'd it be, if ve was to ask'em for some hev'ning next veek, and have a fiddle?"

"Laws, ah!" exclaimed Maria.

"Lorks, but what'll father say," cried Miss Grimshaw.

"You leave that to me," said the mother, "he's stingy enough o'conscience; but vhen his pride is up, he don't mind spending a few pounds extrarnary — ve on't say nothing about it to *he*, till this here wisit is over — and I war'nt'e I'll manurge him — so now, you go your vays, and dress — and dont'e be howers now."

As old Mr. Grimshaw occasionally accommodated his son's family with his carriage, Mrs. Grimshaw dispatched one of the porters to beg the loan of it for a few hours; and she and her daughters having dressed

themselves

themselves in their *best cloaths,* without regard to what was proper for a morning visit, stept into the old chariot, and drove to Portman-Square.

Tom too, dressed himself in his Sunday cloaths: one of his six best cravats adorned a neck previously bandaged with several soiled ones, belonging to an inferior set, while his high shirt collar erect, concealed the lower half of his cheek. His leather breeches were fortunately clean, and strutting under the conscious importance of a head covered by a Cater—a pair of legs encompassed by a pair of Hobys, and a pair of arms dangling in the loose sleeves of a *coatee* made by Dietrichsen, Tom flattered himself he must strike every eye as a first rate blood; but Tom wanted the habitual ease of a man of fashion—a constant anxiety, without judgment, to appear elegant and graceful, gave a stiffness to every action: his figure too was against him—he was but five feet three, and in spite of his attention to manner, he could not conquer a trick, which some short men acquire, of raising the

the chin with a little jerk, as a prelude to a bow — his walk also, seemed to indicate a wish to increase his height, for every step he took, lifted him from the ground higher than necessary.

Among his friends, Tom Grimshaw was accounted a handsome fellow, nor can it be denied that he had *some* pretensions to this enviable distinction; but unfortunately the *expression* of his countenance was decidedly vulgar, and even his voice had a certain turn in it, which was not like a gentleman's voice.

The chariot could not accommodate all of them, and not chusing to run the risk of getting splashed, by walking through the city, Tom set out as soon as he was ready in a hack; but anxious to exhibit himself at the west end of the town, he alighted in Piccadilly, and proceeded with secret exultation to Portman-Square, taking every opportunity by the way, of surveying his person in the shop windows, particularly where plate-glass and dark goods concurred to favor his vanity; and above all others, he found hatters' answered the purpose best.

It

It would be natural to suppose that Tom Grimshaw would have waited for his mother and sisters, but as he held their manners in no small contempt, while on the other hand, he entertained the highest opinion of his own, he imagined that by shewing himself first, he could easily by his fashionable appearance and conversation, prepossess Lady Aucherly in favour of the other branches of his family: under this impression, having determined to introduce himself alone, he walked to and fro in Orchard-Street, to consider, by way of rehearsal, of appropriate speeches on the occasion.

I must be free and easy thought he; neither too pushing nor too shy — then I can talk all about high life — if I had thought of it in time, I could have read the Morning-Post to day — however, no matter.

I shall address her ladyship with a respectful air — "Your ladyship, I presume goes to the new opera; — then, let me see, I can ask her opinion of the Catalani, — but then I shouldn't know whether to say *Cata-*

 laini,

laini or *Catalawni* —— some other'll be best, —"

"Your ladyship finds the Parisot as charming as ever?"

Then, may be, she may ask me to be of her party at the opera—delightful, to be able to say, I was in Lady Somebody's box at the opera—but I must keep up my consequence, I won't appear to catch at it, as if—I can pretend I am engaged to dine with Lord Somebody—

"Your ladyship's very good, but I dine with my lord—no that's to-morrow—I shall certainly do myself the honor to escort your ladyship—"

But if she should ask me what lord?—oh, but she won't, and I could easily turn it off—then I must say something smart to Miss Aucherly—some little compliment.

Devil of it is, mother'll come and spoil all—I must endeavour to engage Lady Aucherly's attention, that she mayn't listen to her low life ways: but there, I know how 'twill be—when I'm lolling genteelly in my chair, chatting with her ladyship, mother'll

ther'll be for putting in her oar — if she calls me *Tom,* I shall faint — then she has got such a vulgar way of smiling and goes telling every body I'm just come out of the measles — and of course they all stare in my face — I can't bear it. Then sisters will go chattering foolishly to Miss Aucherly — knowing nothing of fashion, or what's proper to say.

"Well, I must do away all that," said he, approaching the house, and making himself as tall as he could, — "and now for a dashing knock." — But before Mr. Grimshaw is introduced to Lady Aucherly, it may not be amiss to enquire how her ladyship was engaged.

Miss St. Clair had slept but little, and thinking she should be more likely to gain further particulars of the engagement at Sir Philip's than at home, she set out attended by a footman, and walked to Portman-Square: she was overtaken by Lord John Lennard, who accompanied her to the house, and took the opportunity of paying a visit to Sir Philip.

On

On entering the drawing-room, they found a large party assembled, consisting of Major and Mrs. Lethbridge, Lady Hillingdon and her daughters, Miss Adair and the Duchess of Launçeston; the latter having arrived in town the day before, from her seat in Yorkshire, where the duke had spent the Christmas holidays in true old English hospitality.

Miss Simmons and her sisters were not yet arrived, but as Miss St. Clair stood at one of the windows with Lord John Lennard and Lady Hillingdon, the barouche stopt.

"Here are the Miss Simmonses," said Maria.

"Looking so blooming," added Lord John.

"Mrs. Grosvenor," said Lady Aucherly, "has insisted on my taking them to her ball, and I'm sure I wish to give them every pleasure."

Catherine, Phœbe, and Jessy, went out to receive their sisters, and Caroline followed them, knowing her father would be pleased that she should give her cousins a friendly welcome;

welcome; but being well aware that her mother would not like to have such a troop of young ladies enter the drawing-room, she took them to her dressing-room.

"They are really very fine young women," said Lady Hillingdon, as she stood observing them getting out of the carriage.

"They want a little manner," observed Lady Aucherly.

"Well, but," returned the countess, "we every day see so many young women with too much manner, that I think it in their favour to have too little."

"So it is," said Lady Aucherly; "they are very good girls — and such sweet tempers ——"

"Ah, that's every thing," cried the countess.

"They are a charming family," continued Lady Aucherly, "so fond of each other — so happy among themselves."

"Delightful!" exclaimed her grace of Launceston, while her whole attention was engrossed by a little Dutch pug.

"Then

"Then they are so accomplish'd," pursued Lady Aucherly, "and so attentive to their father ——"

"That's an excellent trait in a young woman's character," said the Countess of Hillingdon, taking a seat near Lady Aucherly.

"By the bye," said Lord John Lennard, "I had the pleasure of witnessing a meeting in Bond-Street, yesterday, between the sisters, and they really seemed ready to devour one another with joy at the *rencontre*."

Lady Aucherly was vexed that Lord John had observed the party, as she felt conscious she had treated the Miss Simmonses with some rudeness, and fearing his lordship might conclude that the Miss Grimshaws were part of the Simmons family, she replied, "there were two young women with Miss Simmons, who were unknown to me — your lordship surely did not mistake them for my nieces."

"I had no idea who they might be," returned Lord John, "or the beau with them. I was at a shop opposite, with the Marquis

of

of Haughton, and I never saw a man so diverted in my life."

"I haven't the pleasure of his acquaintance," said Lady Aucherly, while his exact imitation of Martha's "*Aunt Simmons,*" at the Clifton ball, flashed on her recollection—"but I am glad he can be so easily amused."

"'Gad, we staid out the whole affair—'twas so immensely whimsical to see the young cockney with his hat off displaying his carrotty crop, and handing the ladies into the carriage with such a theatrical air. We afterwards found he was a brother of the two *élégantes* who were with your nieces.—When your carriage drove off, the marquis *would* cross over and follow them; they were full of your ladyship's looks, and highly animated with the gaiety of the street. Their voice was what diverted the marquis—gad, he takes them off exactly—the very tone and articulation—he's an excellent mimic."

"Can't he contrive to turn it to a better account," said Miss St. Clair, "than ridiculing personal defect."

"Oh, gad he's too inconsiderate to think of

of that — I couldn't persuade him to return till he had seen the girls safe into one of the Hammersmith stages."

Here the appearance of Jessy, who could not resist returning to the gay party in the drawing-room, put an end to his lordship's discussion, and as his name had been taken in to Sir Philip, the baronet soon after came in, and hobbled to an easy chair by the fire.

"This is very kind, Lord John," said Sir Philip, shaking him heartily by the hand, and thanking him two or three times for the visit, "this is very kind — and how is the duke? we were college friends — tho' he was some years my senior — I often think of the many happy hours I spent with him."

The baronet then indulged himself in two or three favourite anecdotes of his exploits at college, when he was interrupted in a most interesting part of his story, by a servant, who throwing the door wide open, announced Mr. Thomas Grimshaw.

"Who?" said Sir Philip, "what does he want?"

The

The young man entered to answer for himself, but as the encountering of so large a party had not been taken into his calculations, he felt completely awed, notwithstanding his vaunted courage and good breeding.

Jessy was astonished at his presumption, and hastened to a window, where she entered into conversation with Miss St. Clair, to avoid being claimed as an acquaintance by the city beau.

"Have you any business with me, sir?" enquired Sir Philip.

"Sir, I've done myself the pleasure of calling ——"

"Sir, you do me ——" the baronet paused.

"I hope you are better, sir," said Mr. Grimshaw.

"I am but indifferent, sir."

A silence of several minutes ensued.—The young man sat erect in his chair, with his eyes on the ground, endeavouring to muster up one of the many pretty speeches he had conned; but all in vain—his memory

mory refused to supply him, and the conviction of it completed his confusion; but by way of not being motionless, he settled the frill of his shirt, so as to display a large gold broach, with his initials in a cypher—he now blowed his nose—put one hand for a moment into his bosom, then with nervous agitation quickly felt the sides of the seat of his chair, and in short appeared in a truly uncomfortable and pitiable situation.

At length a thought occurred—"Has your ladyship been an airing to-day?"

Lady Aucherly was engaged in conversation with the countess, but haughtily turning her head, she rested her large eyes on the blushing countenance of Mr. Grimshaw, whom she intimidated by a "Sir!"

"Mr. Grimson," said Major Lethbridge, "is very anxious to know whether you have been an airing to-day or not?"

Her ladyship bowed and continued talking to the countess, whose dimpling cheeks betrayed her strong inclination to laugh.

Another pause ensued, till the weather afforded a subject for Mr. Grimshaw to start;

start; but Lady Aucherly was not attending to him, and Sir Philip sat looking very cross in the fire.

"Mr. Grimstone speaks to your ladyship," said the major.

Lady Aucherly gave a look of enquiry.

"Mr. Gri—Grindstone observes what a *very* fine day it is."

Lady Aucherly could not repress a smile while she bowed to her brother, but took no further notice of the mortified beau, who, after a longer pause, which he found impossible to conquer, rose to take leave, and stammered out, "my mother and sisters intended their—themselves the pleasure to—of calling — I've been waiting for them, as I expected them here before this time — but I suppose there's some mistake, as they ——"

"Very likely," said Major Lethbridge.

"Good morning, Sir Philip," said Mr. Grimshaw.

"Good morning to you, sir," returned the baronet, half raising himself, and ringing the bell with one hand, while his chair

under

under the pressure of the other, moved several inches out of its place; and his feet scuffing up the hearth-rug, occasioned a sort of bustling importance on taking leave, somewhat inconsistent with the coldness of the reception.

Tom Grimshaw's exit was followed by a burst of laughter from the whole party, which, with their noisy observations on his manners, prevented their noticing a carriage stop.

Their mirth however was in a few minutes checked in the height of its violence, by the re-appearance of the subject, accompanied by his sisters and a squab figure of a mother, whose fat seemed to float on her bones.

"Lady Archerly," began Mrs. Grimshaw, "my daughters and self hopes to have the honor, my lady, of your 'quainternce—that's Sir Philup Archerly, I persumes," added she, squatting her buoyant form into a chair. "Sir, your humble."

"Madam," returned Sir Philip, "I have not the honor of knowing you, but I hope I see you well."

"Pure,

"Pure, thank'e, sir; I had the rheumatis terrerble bad about a month agone—but thank God, I'm pure and hearty now."

"I imagine, madam," said Lady Aucherly, with a haughty composure, "we cannot be the persons for whom the honor of this visit is intended."

"Laws so! Lady Archerly," cried Mrs. Grimshaw, with a smile that raised her upper lip like a curtain, "why bless 'e my lady, you knows to be sure who we be! our name's Grimshaw! and Sir Philup's own sister that's dead and gone, married my husbunt's partner as was—that's the connexion you know—and Tom," continued she, turning to her son, "have you made your father's apolorgies for not calling?—you see, my lady, this is Mr. G's busy time or he ou'd a called; but there, we've been wery unfortnit in our famerly with hillness lately—*I* was laid up you know—then *old* Mr. G. a' been hill, and Mr. Salmon our head clerk died a few days agone, 'twas *wery* mollon-cholly—you see, Tom is but just come out of the measles, and when he was so bad

with it, Mr. Salmon would come a tending him and he catch'd it of Tom—oh no fear now—Tom was quite well afore poor Mr. Salmon sicken'd."

"And there Tom's afeard to go to bed," cried Maria, giggling, "expecting Mr. Salmon to come in his shroud."

"What nonsense!" exclaimed Tom, swelling with anger, and endeavouring by family winks to correct his mother's and sister's behaviour.

"Lassa massy!" cried Mrs. Grimshaw, "what a ways this here squeer is from our hend of the town; I had no idear how fur 'twas."

"'Tis a monstroshus way," said Miss Grimshaw, who had never ceased talking to Jessy in an audible whisper, much to the diversion of the company, "but the situation's very pleasant."

"Oh lawk, iss," returned the mother, "'tis a nice hairy sityvation, and I was never here afore, though born'd and bred in Lunnon, 'tis so fur, you see, my lady, from our reserdence, and so I sent our Jem with

with my love, to borry old Mr. G.'s charrot, 'cause I'm *wery* timidious in a hack."

"You had better take something after your long ride, Mrs. Grimshaw," said Major Lethbridge; "let me help you to a glass of wine."

"Sir, you're wery purlite — I've no objections; indeed I vas going to beg a draught of Lady Archerly's small beer — and to say the truth, I could eat vun of them there biskies."

"Wouldn't you prefer some of *that there* cake?" said Mrs. Lethbridge.

"No, thank 'e ma'am — *I* like it, but it don't like *me*," cried Mrs. Grimshaw, wiping her face with a faded silk handkerchief, and spreading it over her lap. "Sir, you're a gen'leman," said she, as the major handed her a glass of wine. "Oh law! if I han't a flopp'd some of it on the nice carput — better ring the bell for a dirty cloth, hadn't 'e — needn't say nothing about it to Lady Aucherly, 'cause she'll make a fuss p'raps. Here's my sarvice to 'e; Sir Philup Archerly, your better health — Lady Archerly,

our better acquainternce — that lady next you — and the lady in the purple welwut — Jessy, my dear, your father's health, and your Aunt Simmons and sisters — Hetty, M'rier, my love to 'e — Tom ——" concluded she, nodding to her son.

"Laws, I forgot to drink Miss Archerly's health — is that Miss Archerly?" enquired Mrs. Grimshaw, pointing to Miss Adair who sat lolling on a sultane, staring alternately at the mother and daughters.

"Ma'am!" said Miss Adair.

"Beg par'n, Miss, if I've made a mistake."

"You pay me a great compliment in taking me for Miss Aucherly; my name is Adair."

"Oh lawk, your pardon, Miss — your pardon; but there, young vimen do halter so, as they grows up, its a'most unposserble to know vun from the t'other — and I ha'n't a seed Miss Archerly since I was at Margate, vhen you was there, Lady Archerly, with your little folks, and I recollects pretty Miss Car'line, and her brothers and sisters tod-

dling

dling along, and your good man folloring 'em about, so happy, seemingly — though she was but a little cretur then, not higher nor the table — and I recollects too, we was both on us in a famurly vay, and Mr. G. laid a vager with Dan'el Hancock, my brother-law that's dead and gone, that you'd be in the straw fust — so you vas; that was when I vent vith my poor dear Billy that's gone to Heaven — you had a little Billy too, then — you ha'n't a lost him, my lady, have e'? — my poor dear little soul died in the small-pox."

"What a low life death," said the Duchess of Launceston aside, though in the hearing of Lady Aucherly, while Mrs. Grimshaw continued.

"Vun o'yourn died in the small-pox too, I think — 'twas a little maid, vasn't it, poor little dear; you must 'a buried a good many; for I used to hear from Simmonses how often you was put to bed, and there I used to joke and say you bred like a rabbut."

It was now impossible to keep from laughing, and the party at the window, gave way

to it without restraint, which formed such a whimsical contrast to the gravity of Sir Philip and the cold *hauteur* of Lady Aucherly, who had merely replied by bows to Mrs. Grimshaw's volubility, that her ladyship was obliged to use the utmost efforts to keep her countenance.

Mrs. Grimshaw sat silent, with a placid good humoured smile, while the daughters joined in the laugh, and Tom endeavoured by the family wink to give his mother a hint that it was time to go, which she interpreting in a different way, returned the wink, by way of letting him know she understood him, and added another, as much as to say, you shall see how I'll manage things—"Jessy, my dear, where's your sisters?"

"Do step and tell'em we be here," said Miss Grimshaw.

"Ah, there's a love do," added her mother.

Jessy obeyed, with a determination of not again making her appearance.

"I long to see Cattern and all on 'em," said Mrs. Grimshaw, "and as for Hetty

and

and M'rier, they be so hoverjoyed as your nieces be home again, nothing can be like it — they be like sisters you know; and there they slept with 'em last night, and there your coach or what it is, cam'd and took away the Simmonses to all manner of plea-suring — and I'm sure 'tis heart-breaking to 'em, for 'em to be parted so, just a'ter a habsence — such friends they be, to be sure — and I ver'ly b'lieve my girls 'ou'd go thro' vater or fire and smoke to sarve any of your nieces my lady — and 'twill spile all their pleasure of going to this here masq'rade without my girls — but there, that can't be — tho' 'twould be but two — and so friendly ——"

"Lars love'e mother, we can't expect Lady Archerly ——"

"No sure," sighed Mrs. Grimshaw, "Ah! dears, and if you was to go, nothing should be spared to set'e off — you should have the best of cloaths — and every thing. I'm sure, if I was going to take my girls to Wauxhall or anywhere, I should think it

 cruel

cruel not to take their friends along with 'em — but there —"

"You don't see the difference, mother," said Tom, "between private parties and public amusements."

"Iss I do child — *I* do — thy mother's no fool, Tom, as I told'e once afore to-day, when we was talking all this over, says I, who knows, says I — "

"Indeed mother, you quite misrepresent the matter; we did *not* talk of —— "

"Oh! what I'm a liar then! Hetty! M'rier! d'ye hear him! you was by, and'll stand me out, for you both on'e knows we *did* settle, how we'd all manage; I *has* a compacity, and I knows very vell vhat I'm about Tom, and I dares to say Lady Archerly will think of my girls, when she gives her rout or what 'tis to be."

"We shall not forget them," observed Lady Aucherly, with a look which the Grimshaws did not understand.

"There Tom!" said his mother; "I'm sure they'll be proud to wait of 'e my lady — "

"That

"That we shall," cried the Miss Grimshaws, who gaining courage, endeavoured to enter into conversation with Miss Adair, but receiving for a reply, a stare and a "Ma'am!" they addressed themselves to Mrs. Lethbridge, who answered them with over-strained politeness, which the Miss Grimshaws did not perceive was intended for a quiz, and feeling further encouraged, began to be quite at home—"Lawk!" cried Miss Grimshaw, "how long the Simmonses be a coming."

"Lars lov'e Hetty," returned her sister, "I s'pose they're making themselves fine—they always was fond of dress; they'll be hours fussing now."

"Vell," said Mrs. Grimshaw, "this von't do; as they don't seem to be coming, Hetty, ve must be going—pray sir," continued she turning to Lord John, "what o'clock may you be?"

"It's past three considerably," returned his lordship.

"How much, sir?"

"By the horse-guards," said Major Lethbridge,

bridge, looking attentively at his watch, "it's exactly twenty-seven minutes and a half."

"So much!" cried Mrs. Grimshaw, rising, "vell then, as we've so fur to go, ve must be on the move—though I vanted to see Miss Aucherly, to perpose some pleasant party; for I hopes to see Sir Philup and you my lady, some hevening next veek as is most agreerble — say Vensday or Thuzday."

"Our stay in town —"

"'Tis to be *a dance*," interrupted Mrs. Grimshaw, hoping to dissipate the frowning refusal gathering on her ladyship's countenance, and firmly persuaded that a dance must overcome all objections, "'Tis to be a dance — and 'twill be so pleasant for the young folks—and any of your friends my lady," continued Mrs. Grimshaw, in a swelling tone, and making a sweeping courtsey to the company, "we shall be proud and happy to see."

"That's hearty," said Major Lethbridge, "and I'm sure I shall be very—"

"We

"We are engaged, madam," said Lady Aucherly interrupting him, "during the short stay we make in town."

"Dears heart alive!" cried Mrs Grimshaw, "don't 'e say so — but 'tis on'y your fudge I *do* think — can't'e stay a little longer?" continued she, approaching to take leave of Lady Aucherly: "you *shall* come and see us, I *must* make a *pint* of it."

"We won't hear of a refusal," said Miss Grimshaw.

"That's the best way," added her sister, while Tom was exerting the family wink to no purpose to get them out of the room.

"You *must* name a day my lady," said Mrs. Grimshaw, laying her weighty hand on Lady Aucherly's arm, and coaxingly shaking it with a friendly squeeze to enforce her entreaties, while Lady Aucherly half started back to release herself from the unexpected grasp.

"My hand bain't pison, my lady," said Mrs. Grimshaw, laughing good humouredly, and displaying her palm in a silk mitten —

 "nor

"nor 'tain't a damp hand—now M'rier *have* a damp hand; but Hetty ha'nt; then again Tom *have*—'tis o' *Mr.* G.'s side—his sister have—and old Mr. G. have."

"I really feel for the family calamity," said Major Lethbridge.

"'Tis a misfortin Sir—and vhat's vuss ve can't never find no cure for it—the things ve have tried!!!—Tom's got a his-sue in each arm now—be they both kept open Tom?"

"I've no such thing mother—I don't know what you're talking about."

"Oh fie, oh fie, Tom—vhen 'twas but last Ven'sday-veek Docter Godfrey dress'd your arm—you know," continued Mrs. Grimshaw, turning to Lady Aucherly with a familiar nod, "'tis what young people doesn't like to have talked about—but there as I says, amongst friends," added she, looking round the room, "vhat sinifies it as I say—and I *vill* speak Tom, for all your vinks—and cross looks—vhich I'm sure you dont owe to me, who 'a been such a tinder mother, and vatch'd over'e

 vhen

vhen you was a little veakly, sickly cretur — a'most blinded with sore eyes a'ter the small-pox — you'd a been a pale corpse at this minute if it hadn't been for me, and a follor'd poor little Billy to the cold pit-hole, you would," concluded Mrs. Grimshaw, sobbing and seating herself for a few seconds in the nearest chair, to recover herself.

"Lawks mother," cried Miss Grimshaw, "don't'e take on like this."

"Ah! dears! you don't know a mother's feelings — To think of that child there! why one ou'd think he was intosticated — one *raily* ou'd — Oh Tom! that ever you should let me know how sharper than a sharpent's — what is it — than a dragon's tooth it is, to have a toothless son — a — a thankless son — but there I 'on't think no more about it — forget and forgive *I* say" added Mrs. Grimshaw, rising, and resuming her good humoured smile — "Come, chillern, we must be going — Vell Lady Archerly, if I can't purvail on 'e to dirty a knife and fork with us *this* time, all as is, ve must dis-

fer

fer it, 'till next time as you comes to Lunnon, and then ve'll be better acquainted, on't us? — Ah, *that* ve vill — we 'on't purtend to know vun another in vun wisit: 'tis morarly unposserble."

"Good morning to you, madam," said Sir Philip impatiently.

"G'margn 't 'e sir," returned Mrs. Grimshaw, "and all on'e."

"*G'margn' t' 'e* ma'am," said Major Lethbridge.

"Sir — Lady Archerly your humble, — ladies and gentlemen all, your sarvant," said Mrs. Grimshaw, leaving the room, followed by her hopeful family.

On the stairs they were met by the Duke of Montolieu's sisters who came running into the drawing-room looking much diverted.

"We are just come from Grosvenor-square," said Lady Jane St. Clair: "and the duchess insists on your dining with her on Saturday, and taking a seat in her box at the opera."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Lady Helen throwing

throwing herself into a chair, "who were those strange people we pass'd on the stairs?"

"They are foreigners of distinction," replied Major Lethbridge—"an *oriental* family."

"I never saw such a feather bed figure," cried the Duchess of Launceston.

"Your grace's pug," said the major, "nearly swoon'd with fear; I observ'd he trembled and turn'd pale the moment she entered the room."

"Poor Whimsiculo!" drawled the duchess, following the major to the window, where the rest of the company were flocking to enjoy the last glimpse of the *good people* who had afforded them so much amusement.

Mrs. Grimshaw was in the act of getting into the old chariot; one foot was firmly placed on the high step, by which means the other leg was entirely displayed.

"What a neatly turn'd ancle!" remarked Miss Adair.

"I

"I never saw such a leg," drawled the duchess.

"'Tis the bolster belonging to the bed," said the major—"and there's a bit of the blanket peeping above it."

Mrs. Grimshaw, holding the sides of the carriage door, with both hands, was attempting to draw in her bulky carcase, while her son having decently covered "*the bolster*," began pushing her in with both his hands.

"She'll never get in," said Miss Adair.

"She'll certainly stick," cried the major.

"You had better go and assist her dutiful son," said Lord John.

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Miss Adair, "I shall die of laughing—she's getting down again."

"To take breath," added Major Lethbridge; "look, she's wiping her face—she's quite exhausted—now for another attempt—ah, she tries the other bolster first—come, I think she'll succeed—her head and shoulders are in—now a little exertion, and a movement sideways to conquer those immense

mense

mense hips, and she triumphs—there really ought to be some apparatus invented to assist people in such extremities."

The merriment to which this scene gave rise, afforded Lady Aucherly an opportunity of privately *thanking* Sir Philip for the mortifications she had endured.

"How could I help it?" returned he, "d'ye think I did not wish them far enough?—I was plagued to death to hear that woman talk."

"They are the friends of *your* nieces, Sir Philip, and if——"

"Good God!" cried Sir Philip, "d'ye think——" but perceiving some of the company resuming their seats, he turned the bitterness of his speech against the Grimshaws, and continued—"what a conceited coxcomb that was—I never witness'd such confounded impudence in a whole family in all my life."

"They were most amazingly amusing," said Lord John.

"Where, under heaven, could they

come

come from?" drawled the Duchess of Launceston.

"Out of the heart, liver, and lights of the city," replied the major.

"Oh, fie!" cried Miss Adair, affectedly turning away.

Mrs. Lethbridge declared it was quite a comedy.

"*Mr. Tom's* part in the first act was admirably supported," observed Miss St. Clair, "and the ladies came off with great eclat in the second."

"We had the pleasure of acting audience," said Lady Hillingdon.

"While my aunt," continued Miss St. Clair, "and the Grimshaws, were the *dramatis personæ.*"

"*Your* part," said Major Lethbridge to his sister, "was a *very* arduous one."

"I pitied poor Lady Aucherly from my heart," drawled the duchess.

"Oh, I enjoy'd the *scene* vastly," returned Lady Aucherly.

"You were quite at home," cried the major.

"That

"That was the misfortune," said Lady Aucherly, "for if the *young gentleman*, who made his *début* on these boards, had been kind enough to have mentioned his mother's intended visit sooner, I should have taken care to have been denied."

This was uttered with a most animated countenance, and a great vivacity of manner, to conceal her inward chagrin—it was not, that she thought her importance would be lowered in the opinion of any one present, but she could not tell how the story might get abroad in the world. It was her wish to appear, during her short stay in town, as a brilliant star, and she felt its disk would be obscured by having her name coupled with Mrs. Grimshaw's in some ludicrous tale.

The occurrences of the morning had for the time amused Miss St. Clair from the object of her visit; and no further intelligence having yet transpired, she returned home dejected, and endeavoured by the plea of a head-ache, to satisfy Mrs. St. Clair's anxious enquiries.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VI.

FASHIONABLE CHILDHOOD — MRS. GROSVENOR'S MASQUERADE.

MISS St. Clair's fears were the next morning removed by a visit from Mrs. Macmaurice, from whom she learnt, that an express had arrived late the preceding evening, which had brought letters from the admiral, with a list of the killed and wounded, and transmitting the names of several officers who had distinguished themselves in the engagement; among whom, Charles Hugh Macmaurice was spoken of with the highest encomiums.

Maria's heart beat for joy, while Mrs. Macmaurice, half wild, was running from friend

friend to friend to communicate the welcome news.

She called on her sister Grosvenor, whom she expected to find fully occupied with the preparations for the ball in the evening: the house indeed exhibited the greatest confusion. The entrance hall was half filled with boughs of laurel, and various evergreens; with which, interspersed with coloured lamps, several men were decorating the arches and pillars: the floor of the ball-room was under the hands of an eminent artist, and a gardener with his assistants was embellishing the lobby; one side of which presented a luxuriant orangery, while the other, fenced by an elegant trellis, entwined by a variety of foreign jasmines, appeared a thicket of roses.

While noise and confusion reigned over so many parts of the house, Mrs. Grosvenor was found in her dressing-room, perfectly composed, selecting her ornaments for the evening.

Two little girls, in Fatima dresses, were seated on velvet cushions on the ground,

playing

playing with various trinkets; and Morley, Mrs. Grosvenor's woman, was dressing her hair.

"L—d, Isabella," cried Mrs. Macmaurice, "what are you about, I expected to find you all in a bustle, why the house is in an uproar below stairs."

"Oh," returned her sister, "Grosvenor has given directions to Frescati, and he takes all the trouble of superintending the decorations himself."

"L—d, why d'ye let the children play with those pearls?"

"Georgiana," said Mrs. Grosvenor, "my sweet love, give me that necklace—oh, you won't?—well, but I'm quite delighted Charlotte, to hear of this news."

"Oh, I'm so happy!" returned Mrs. Macmaurice, "but I was in a terrible fright at first—I did'nt sleep a wink all last night, and this morning I couldn't rest till Mac got news from the admiralty. I shall be in *such* spirits to-night—L—d, look here, the child has broken the string, and away go the pearls, quick march, about the floor."

"Why

"Why Georgy! my dear, what have you done?"

"'Twasn't long enough to go round my waist."

"You little puss," said Mrs. Grosvenor, "now call Flora to pick them up."

"L—d! look how she walks," cried Mrs. Macmaurice.

"Oh, she's the most affected thing!"

Georgiana's "Flora! Flora!" was answered by "coming missa," and a little tawny girl presently entered and began, upon her hands and knees, picking up the scattered pearls.

A fine little boy, of five years of age, now came bouncing in, and waving his hat and feather in the air, cried "Huzza! for Lieutenant Macmaurice!—Huzza! huzza!"

"Oh, you dear creature," cried Mrs. Macmaurice; "why this, is my god-son—come and give me a kiss, Charles."

"Huzza!" repeated Charles, leaping upon Flora's back, "get on Flora, come on with you," continued he, pretending to use the spur, "get on, let's see how you can

can trot — this is my black mare; come, shew off."

"I caun't now, Massa Charles, I shall lose the pearls."

"Don't teaze Flora now, my dear," said Mrs. Grosvenor — "come shew your aunt how well you can go through your exercise: run for your broad-sword."

"No?" exclaimed the child, leaping on the ground, "I'll be a sailor — huzza! for Lieutenant Macmaurice."

"Huzza!" repeated Mrs. Macmaurice, "but you were to be in our regiment, you know."

"Oh, yes, so I will, I'll be a captain, d—n if I won't."

"L—d, what a delightful little fellow 'tis!" cried Mrs. Macmaurice.

Here a black woman opened the door, and scarcely shewing herself, drawled out, Massa Charles, maum, throw down the great cheyney jar, maum, and all broke maum."

"Oh, you wicked mischievous little monkey," said his mother, as the boy play-fully

fully hid his face in Mrs. Macmaurice's lap.

"'Twas the great dog did it; not you, love," whispered Mrs. Macmaurice to him.

"Don't teach that little thing to tell lies," returned her sister, "he's too fond of them already — Quasheba, do help Flora; that lazy creature will never have done."

"What are the other boys about?" enquired Mrs. Macmaurice, "sha'n't I see them?"

"Where are your brothers Charles?" said Mrs. Grosvenor.

"They're in the *gorden*."

"Go for them then," said his mother.

"I'd *rauther* stay here — Flora, you go," said he, driving her out of the room.

"Oh, fie, Charles!" said Mrs. Grosvenor; "Flora, call Master Howard and Master Frederic."

These boys were four or five years older than Charles, and now entered in high spirits.

"Mrs., Aunt Macmaurice," said Howard,

ard, "your most obedient humble servant."

"Mrs. Lady Dragoon, how are you?" said his brother.

"Oh, you little rascal, who taught you to call me nick names?"

"Mr. Skefton — the Honourable John Skefton — you'll see him here to-night, with the Yorke party."

"And what character are you to be in?" enquired Mrs. Macmaurice.

"They are all to be Cupids," replied her sister, "and Adelaide is to be Psyche."

"And Louis is to be Hymen," added Howard.

"We're to have little wings," lisped Cecilia.

"Now, *mamah*," said Howard, "wasn't I to have the quiver that came home first?"

"That's mine," said Frederic; "you can't have it."

"But I will," returned the other— "I'm older than you, and I *will* have it."

"I'll

"I'll be d—d if you shall," exclaimed Frederic, stamping.

"Oh, fie, Frederic, what a passion," said his mother, calmly, "you must all go away, I can't bear this noise."

"L—d, they put me so much in mind of my boys when they were youngsters."

"Their father spoils them," returned Mrs. Grosvenor.

The boys went fighting down stairs, and Mrs. Macmaurice hastened to Portman-square to communicate the happiness she felt to Lady Aucherly.

Mrs. Grosvenor's masquerade had been the subject of much conversation, and it was expected to exceed all former entertainments of the kind. The decorations were not completed till the evening, when a magnificent transparency, in honour of the recent naval victory, was fixed up over the entrance to the ball-room.

The company did not begin to assemble till past ten, from which hour till twelve, every avenue to Portland-Place was thronged with carriages.

 The

The Prince arrived soon after eleven, in a black domino, and partook of an elegant supper with a party of his own selecting, in a separate room on a service of gold plate.

Many of the other branches of the Royal Family, with several foreign *noblesse*, ambassadors, &c. &c. honoured Mrs. Grosvenor with their company.

Lady Aucherly had not been long in the room before an old woman, almost bent double with age, approached, and accosting her in accents of extreme poverty, solicited charity.

"Don't be troublesome," said Lady Aucherly, "I never give to *impostors*."

"The Lord have mercy on your sweet voice, and turn your heart with compassion on a poor auld wretch —"

"Go to those who know you," returned Caroline.

"And are *you* so hard-hearted, Miss Caroline."

"And pray who told you my name!"

"Ah," sighed the old woman, "if *you* don't

don't know a poor crater half in the grave, *I* can never forget the pretty Miss Caroline that I've nuss'd and nuss'd and kiss'd and kiss'd—ah! what you begin to remember auld nuss Crofts!—and there my poor auld eyes can't find out who they all be here."

"Younger eyes than yours are equally at a loss."

"Ah! Miss, they must be good eyes as sees through *all* their characters—when their names be known the business isn't half complete: there's a mask in real life, which few have skill to penetrate."

"Why you're quite a moralist!"

"Look at me, miss—I have seen better days—then, all went well, and all I knew of people's hearts, was the fair outsides; but crosses and troubles, miss, do shew us a a little of the inside—for *one may smile, and smile, and be a villain*; but there I didn't come here to complain—I want to find out all my acquaintance—now pray, my dear young lady, *do* tell me who that piece of clock-work is—'tisn't Mrs. Dorrington, is it?"

"Certainly not."

"Dearee me! and how you be grow'd! and how be the Miss Dorringtons and little Miss Emirly? but there I suppose she's sprouted up, like all the rest on'e, out of all knowledge — be she here, miss? — dear, I should like to see her."

"All the family I believe are here; but I don't know in what characters."

"Don't'e miss — dearee me! and who be all these young misses with'e — well there my eyes be quite dazzled like, as Mrs. Mansell says."

"Who *can* this oddity be!" cried Caroline, turning to her mother.

"'Tis very strange," said Lady Aucherly, "tell me, good woman, where you live."

"I live in Portland-Place just now, and please your ladyship, but my poor cottage is in Exeter — you do know well enough I was month-nuss to 'e, only you don't care to recollect me in this grand company.

"And how came you here?" continued Lady Aucherly, hoping to put the mask off its guard.

"To

"To see Miss Caroline to be sure," answered the old woman, "and I must have a kiss of her pretty lips, when nobody sees — and then I'll go home."

"It must be somebody that knows our family well," said Caroline.

"Know, 'e miss! aye, that I should if you were in rags and tatters — and your brother too, Lord love'n, wherever he be: he used to say auld nuss Crofts was his wife, ha! ha! ha! but he knows better now, ha! ha! ha!"

The old woman went laughing away, and mixed in the crowd.

"I cannot conceive who it can be," cried Caroline, "I long to find out."

"I cannot think," said Miss Simmons, who with her sisters formed a group of flower girls in Spanish dresses, while Lady Aucherly and Caroline appeared in the most elegant *costume* of the same nation.

"What a charming throng this is," said Clarissa.

"I never saw any thing like it," cried Jessy, "I'm delighted."

Her sisters expressed themselves equally pleased with the novelty, magnificence, and gaiety of the scene.

"The muses are here," said a voice behind them.

"Oh," returned another, "there are always muses, gypsies, nuns, and —"

"But I mean the *Bath* muses, marquis," interrupted the first.

"Oh, your lordship means Lady Aucherly's nieces?"

"Yes," said a third mask, in a pink domino, "the Lady Apollo and the nine; they went by no other name at Bath this winter—there was one of them who ran off with a young Esculapius, and there *she* is in her wedding suit, you see she's finer than the rest."

"By your account, marquis, we shall have rare diversion, if we keep a sharp look out."

"Yes," said a voice, which Lady Aucherly was convinced was the Marquis of Haughton's, "we shall have, "*Lars lov'e*," and "*Aunt Archerly.*"

"Aunt

"Aunt *Simmons*, you mean," returned the first.

"You don't speak it well, Mellish, 'Aunt Simmons!'" repeated the marquis in a shriller tone.

"This *same* Aunt Simmons," said the Pink Domino, "I understand is quite a female Chesterfield—one of the most elegant hypocri——"

The *critical* conclusion of this sentence was checked by several of the Miss Simmonses involuntarily turning their heads on hearing their names mentioned.

"Hush, we are heard," said the marquis, sheering off, little thinking how he had tortured Lady Aucherly's feelings.

"Oysters! fine oysters!" cried Mrs. Macmaurice, passing by, excellently dressed as a *poissarde*.

"Vastly well," said Lady Aucherly, "she supports her character with admirable spirit—— Caroline, look at this splendid figure."

"What is it—the queen of diamonds?"

 The

The splendid figure approached them, crying, "Do you know *me*?"

"Perfectly well" replied Lady Aucherly.

"I'm a Sultaness," said the lady, "but I can't think what you are, somehow."

"Our dresses you see are Spanish ——"

"Oh, law, ah, yes, I see now, all with slashes, like."

"Oysters! fine oysters!" cried Mrs. Macmaurice, returning and whispering to Lady Aucherly, as she passed, "that Sultaness has been mewing all round the room, 'do you know *me*?'—her voice betrays her kitten-face."

"Oh!" said Lady Aucherly, "a well-known trembling spray of diamonds told me it was poor Mrs. Mansell."

"L—d, here are all the Dorringtons coming—I shall bustle away."

A group of Arcadians approached.

"And how does Lady Aucherly get through this crowd?" enquired Mrs. Dorrington; "isn't it almost insupportable!"

"We all approve of it very much," re-

turned

turned Lady Aucherly, "and anticipate the delights of its being *quite* insupportable."

"Oh, the company are not half arrived," added Caroline; "do tell me, Henrietta, who the Scotch peasant is, speaking to your sister; he has been watching our party this half hour."

"*You* are the attraction," replied Henrietta, "I assure you he's very much smitten, 'tis Mr. Ross—don't you recollect him at Lady Camleigh's!"

Caroline affected to have forgotten the circumstance; and turning to Emily pointed out a Jew Pedlar, who was coming towards them.

"He has been very troublesome to us already," said Emily, "and I see there's no getting rid of him."

"Vhat d'ye buy? vhat d'ye buy?" cried the pedlar, "come, young ladiesh, you'll bring me good luck, I'll make presents to you; come, my pretty dearsh, vhat vill you shuse?"

"Any thing but your *presence*," said Henrietta.

"My Gad! that you should slight vhat I account most dear!"

"The cheapest things are dear when we have no occasion for them."

"And the dearest things are sometimes held too cheap," said the Pedlar, retiring, while a numerous gang of gypsies rushed by and separated Emily from her party: crowds were now pressing from another room, and she presently found herself surrounded by a set of drunken sailors.

"Pray, gentlemen, let me pass," cried Emily, terrified at their behaviour.

"Stop, sweet Poll of Plymouth," exclaimed one, "you're at home with us."

"A kiss for me, and I'll be your convoy," cried another.

"Pray let me pass," repeated Emily.

"First let us know who you are—come, shew your colours."

"You are very presuming, sir," cried Emily, endeavouring to escape; but whichever way she turned, she found herself opposed.

At this moment a Maltese officer stept

forwards

forwards to Emily's assistance, and conducted her safely out of the reach of her persecutors, who were too much intoxicated to answer for their conduct.

"I have lost my party," said Emily, agitated and out of breath with fear—"if you could find Mrs. Dorrington, sir——"

"Mrs. Dorrington!" exclaimed the Maltese, "Good G—d! can this be Emily O'Connor!"

"You know me then," said Emily.

"William Aucherly can never forget one so dear to him," replied he, pressing her hand.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Emily—"what an unexpected pleasure!"

After various interesting enquiries had passed between them, William regretted the necessity of his returning the next day to Oxford, where, added he, "I'm supposed to be at this moment in a high fever, attended by two physicians—I only arrived an hour ago with the Grosvenors and Charles Temple—"

"Who, I suppose," cried Emily, "is at this

this moment in a *low* fever, attended by two *apothecaries*!"

"You are not far from the mark," said he laughing; excuses are soon coin'd—we dash'd down to Stevens's—toss'd off a few bottles of champagne, and here we are."

"A little disguised," said Emily.

"What you've learnt to pun, have you? and how does the worthy Dorrington like that?—I heard you were all here, and I've been longing to unmask every pretty figure in the room, to find you out—I've been most amazingly puzzled—some said, you were among a group of Bacchanalians, but that didn't go down; I knew the Dorrington wouldn't think that respectable—then Harry Grosvenor swore you were a Lydia Languish, and led me a dance after Lady Cecilia Bentley—but you haven't told me how you like me—rather gay isn't it? you should have seen me just now; I came in first as an old woman, and have been raising the curiosity of my mother and Caroline in a high style; this dress will help me to carry

carry the joke a little farther—so mind, not a word to any one of my being here."

At this instant, Mrs. Dorrington, who had been in pursuit of Emily, approached, and seeing a gentleman in conversation with her, was not a little surprized, as she was led to imagine that her secession from her party had been by design: Mrs. Dorrington requested Emily, somewhat gravely, not to run away again, without letting her know she had a protector.

Emily was on the point of telling who it was, when recollecting William's injunction, she looked round to ask his permission, but he had disappeared; she merely stated therefore the awkward situation she had been in, and that she was thanking the gentleman for his assistance, when Mrs. Dorrington came up.

This account satisfied Mrs. Dorrington, and she made no further enquiry.

Henrietta, who had been strolling through the rooms with her aunt, the Marchioness of Shirehampton, now hastened to her sisters, and in a low voice, yet with some earnest-

ness,

ness, informed them that Mr. Wortham was there.

"Well," said Miss Dorrington, "and what then?"

"Oh, nothing," replied Henrietta, vexed that she should have undesignedly betrayed her partiality.

"*Nothing!*" repeated Miss Dorrington, archly, "surely Henrietta is not in the habit of talking of nothing with so much eloquence in her looks!"

"Pshaw, I was only wondering whether he would recollect me."

"What character is he in?" enquired Lucy.

"Didn't I tell you—the Jew Pedlar; I saw him speaking to Major Lethbridge, who unguardedly called him by his name."

"The *dearest* things are sometimes held too cheap," said Emily, mimicking the pedlar's voice, "you now perhaps regret the absence of your Jewish friend; at least, you'd not regard his *presents* with indifference."

"The gypsies sadly disconcerted us," said Lady Aucherly, joining Mrs. Dorrington's party;

party; "my dear Emily how did you get through them?"

"Oh, she was in a most interesting dilemma," said Lucy, "do you know who they were?"

"Mrs. and Miss Yorke, and their friends," returned Lady Aucherly; "Sir Cæsar Devereux, Mr. Skefton, and Lord and Lady Broxholme."

"And my Lord Effersham," added Caroline.

"I never saw such a romping set in my life," said Miss Dorrington, "do you see, they are now dancing reels."

"In the true Highland fling," observed her mother.

"Your swain, Caroline," said Henrietta, "had better join them; he's quite in character for a reel."

"He would at least be better employ'd," returned Caroline, "than playing the lackey."

"I'll tell him you don't chuse him to follow you."

"By no means," said Caroline.

"Oh,

"Oh, then you *do* chuse it?"

"I don't chuse to let him know that I have noticed his intrusive attention—look, here's my uncle."

"This postman is Major Lethbridge, I understand," said Mrs. Dorrington to Lady Aucherly.

"Yes and acquits himself very well; are there no letters for me?"

"The married ladies," replied Major Lethbridge, "have been so eager for *billets doux*, that all I had design'd for them have been distributed long ago; I've a few left for single ladies—here, my fair Arcadian," continued he presenting a letter to Miss Dorrington, "here's news from your absent lover."

"Pray, Mr. Postman," cried Caroline, "don't overlook me."

"Here then, take this, Senora," said he quickly passing on.

Caroline finding the letter contain but little wit, flung it away: Ross who was behind her, picked it up, and reversing the paper, hastily wrote a line with a pencil, and folding

folding the letter again, presented it to her, saying in an impressive tone: —

"Lady, pray receive a poor Highlander's petition."

Caroline took the paper and read

"—— If thou shalt ever love,
"In the sweet pangs of it remember me."

"Let me see what you have there?" said Henrietta.

"It's nonsense," returned Caroline, destroying the paper, but the lines were fixed in her memory.

The supper-rooms were now thrown open, and the company delighted with the *coup d'œil*, pressed forwards to secure places. — This suite of apartments was brilliantly illuminated, and tastefully ornamented with festoons of flowers, interspersed with variegated lamps.

The supper was elegant and costly: the talents of the most eminent confectioner had been employed to decorate the tables, and no expence was spared to render the entertainment worthy the distinguished assembly that

that sat down to it. The choicest viands were served on the most magnificent French china; the dessert consisted of the most delicious fruits; the wines were of the finest flavour, and rarest kinds.

Most of the company now unmasked, and as Emily took her seat at table near Mrs. Dorrington, she observed William Aucherly conversing with his mother.

As there could be now no reason for concealment, she pointed him out to Mrs. Dorrington, and explained why she had not before told who it was.

Mrs. Dorrington heard her with a reflective air, as if she were putting together all the circumstances attending the meeting between Emily and the Maltese, and considering them in a different point of view, now she was informed that he was no other than William Aucherly.

A French *restaurateur* here passed by recommending his favourite dishes.

"Do you know who it is?" said Miss Dorrington.

"I should

"I should not wonder," replied Emily, "if it were Mr. Grosvenor."

"I've a notion," said Mrs. Dorrington, "it is the Duke of Montolieu,—perhaps Mr. Ross knows—can't you make room for him, he has been standing some time very patiently behind you."

"Mr. Ross, here's plenty of room," said Miss Dorrington.

Ross heard her not, his eyes and thoughts were fixed on Caroline, who sat at no great distance and was talking earnestly to her brother; with much vivacity she rallied him upon his adventure with Emily, and as she turned to observe the Dorrington party, her eyes fell upon the pensive countenance of James Ross.

"William, said Caroline, "do you know that gentleman standing by Miss Dorrington."

"No, is it her intended?"

"I believe she is otherwise engaged—but I thought you might have seen him somewhere."

Ross perceived that Caroline had observed

him, and flattered himself, that her eyes had not been directed towards him by accident.

"Why, Mr. Ross," cried Emily, "you are surely dreaming! Miss Dorrington has been offering you a seat this half hour."

I beg Miss Dorrington's pardon," said he, accepting the room that was made for him.

"I'm glad to have a beau by me," said Miss Dorrington, "my Lord Castlehayes who handed me to supper, was invited by the Prince to his party, and as Lucy engrosses my Lord Falkner, and Henrietta has renewed her acquaintance with Mr. Wortham, I seemed quite deserted — as for Emily, she has lost her wits ever since her adventure with the jovial tars."

After supper, the merry dance was renewed, and William Aucherly secured Emily for his partner: with more than usual animation, she eclipsed every other in the room, and though Lady Aucherly felt a little jealous that Emily should excite more notice than her daughter, she had the gratification

fication of seeing Caroline introduced to the Marquis of Haughton, and hope presented a brilliant prospect to her sanguine imagination.

About three o'clock Mrs. Dorrington drew away her party. Lady Aucherly was not sorry they were gone, as well on Caroline's account as on her son's, as she was not a little displeased at the good understanding that appeared to subsist between him and Emily.

The company continued in excellent spirits till a late hour: Lord Charles Bentley, an excellent Momus, lent his aid to enliven the scene, and his brother Lord George, as an Auctioneer, stationed himself near the door as the company were departing, and created a great deal of mirth by his humourous remarks *à la Christie,* as they were *going.*

CHAPTER VII.

THE FRUIT SHOP — THE OPERA.

WILLIAM AUCHERLY was now nearly nineteen years of age: he was tall and well proportioned; his countenance exhibited a manly resemblance of his mother's beauty, while in disposition he partook more of his father and Major Lethbridge; he was open-hearted and sincere like the former, and had all the vivacity of the latter.

While William regarded his own family with an ardent affection, his breast glowed with a romantic attachment for Emily: young as he was when he first thought of her in any other light, than as a play-fellow, and however enlarged his ideas became

on

on a more unconfined acquaintance with the world, his heart still cherished a tender remembrance of the interesting girl, and bounded with rapture in the conviction that he was not indifferent to her.

Soon after Mrs. Dorrington's party quitted the festive scene in Portland-place, William returned to Stevens's Hotel, in Bond-street, where he slept: the image of his Emily, floated in his imagination; his dreams again presented their unexpected rencontre — her voice dwelt on his ear — he still pressed her hand.

When he awoke, the thoughts of returning to Oxford without seeing her again, were distressing to his feelings, and after some consideration, he determined to make one effort to obtain an interview before his departure: hastily finishing his breakfast, he hurried towards Cavendish-square; but on approaching the house, he began to consider, how he could excuse his call to the Dorringtons; for of course his visit must appear as if made to them — he now hesitated, and concluded that in no way could

 he

find a pretence for calling so early, except his being obliged to go out of town—and were he to give that as a reason, Mrs. Dorrington might wonder perhaps, why he troubled himself to call at all. He resolved therefore, to wait an hour or two, and having strolled as far as Hyde Park Corner, to fill up the tedious interim, he returned to Cavendish-square—he looked at his watch; it still wanted an hour of the time prescribed—never did an hour pass so slowly; never did the bustle of Piccadilly appear so uninteresting. At length, with a palpitating heart he knocked at the door: he enquired for Mrs. Dorrington, and was shewn into the drawing-room, where she was sitting with her eldest daughter and Mrs. Lovell. He cast his eyes round the room, but the figure of Emily met them not: he enquired of Miss Dorrington how her sisters and Miss O'Connor were, hoping to hear that they would soon make their appearance, but received an answer no further satisfactory than that they were all quite well.

He

He saw a chair, on which he fancied Emily might have been sitting — a work-bag was on it, which might be her's — this reminded him of their youthful pleasures, when Emily had been seated on some verdant bank, while he sat at her feet reading to her, and often stopt to gaze on her delicate fingers as they gracefully guided the needle.

Mrs. Dorrington perceived William was very absent during his visit; for while she was asking his opinion of Scott's Lay of the last Minstrel, and other new books, his eyes were continually wandering towards the door, hoping Emily might enter, and eager to ensure the first glance; but no Emily appeared, and after making an unconscionably long morning visit he rose and took leave.

He had scarcely reached the top of the stairs before he heard foot-steps on the flight above him — he looked up, and beheld Emily descending — he advanced to meet her; confessed the object of his visit, and bidding her a tender adieu, he took her

 hand,

hand, pressed it to his lips, and while he still held it, Mrs. Dorrington came out of the drawing-room. Their confusion may be better imagined than described; Emily hastily withdrew her hand; and William, after attempting two or three awkward unfinished sentences, bowed and hurried out of the house.

Mrs. Dorrington looked surprised, and as she proceeded to her dressing-room, requested Emily to attend her for a few minutes.

Emily would have given worlds to escape, but followed in silence.

Mrs. Dorrington expected the strictest propriety in female deportment, and considered any thing like secret interviews, as highly derogatory to the delicacy of the sex.

"Perhaps my dear Emily thinks," said Mrs. Dorrington, "that I am assuming to myself an office not properly my own —"

"I am very sensible of your kindness," interrupted Emily, "and —"

"Hear me," continued Mrs. Dorrington, mildly, "I have no right to expect, that you should regard me in any other light,

light, than as a friend, and as such, allow me to offer my advice. I do not require you to make me your confidante — but — I am fearful my dear Emily may have bestowed her affections on one, too young to appreciate her worth. Your interview with Mr. Aucherly — "

" I assure you my dear madam," said Emily earnestly, " it was quite by accident that I came down as he was going — and when I wished him a good journey," added Emily deeply blushing, " he took my hand unawares."

" I was not going to censure you for meeting him Emily — and as for his taking your hand, believe me, I did not observe it — it is from the evident confusion in which my appearance threw you both, I form my conjectures; I only wish to advise, not to accuse — and I avail myself of this opportunity to guard you from suffering your affections to be too deeply engaged without opening your heart to Mrs. Lovell — do not distress yourself," continued Mrs. Dorrington, observing a tear stealing down Emily's

cheek—"we'll dismiss the subject—for your own good sense will be a safe guide for your conduct, now you must be aware that it is incumbent on you to exert it."

When Emily retired to her room, her tears redoubled: she felt a lively gratitude for Mrs. Dorrington's kindness, and was convinced of the propriety of her advice; yet situated as Emily was, she dreaded communicating with Mrs. Lovell, lest she should think it right to make Sir Philip acquainted with the attachment his son had formed, and the idea of exiling him from her thoughts, was too painful to be endured.

Lady Aucherly was too politic to suffer the temporary fascinations of London to divert her attention from the schemes she hoped to accomplish for the more permanent enjoyment of them. With Caroline's assistance she had obtained Sir Philip's consent to give a ball to a select party, and wishing to consult

sult the Duchess of Montolieu in fixing the day, she drove to Grosvenor-square, where she learnt to her surprise that her grace had *walked* out with a party to Bond-street; Lady Aucherly therefore alighted, and ordering her carriage to wait at the corner of Brook-street, she proceeded with Caroline and the Miss Simmonses towards Bond-street, in hopes of meeting the duchess, but in their way, Lady Aucherly distinguished the Miss Grimshaws approaching, looking taller than usual by the help of pattens.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Lady Aucherly, "how shall we escape these friends of yours—you must not see them—now look steadfastly at this carriage that's coming—bow earnestly to the lady in it—'tis the old Duchess of Durham, who is so purblind, she can't distinguish any one at this distance."

The Miss Simmonses practised Lady Aucherly's lesson so well, that the Miss Grimshaws passed them almost petrified with astonishment at the effrontery of their quondam friends.

"There! there!" said Miss Grimshaw to her sister, "what d'ye think of that!"

"Proud minxes," returned the other, "I've a great mind to let 'em know who's who."

"And I *will* too," cried the eldest, turning back, "I'll let 'em know their tricks won't go down with me."

"Lawks, ah," cried Maria Grimshaw, "do let's follor 'em—I don't care for her ladyship's proud looks no more than snuff."

With this magnanimous declaration, the Misses Grimshaw followed Lady Aucherly, and were nearly coming up with her, as her ladyship reached Bond-street, where she met the Duchess of Montolieu and Miss Adair, who for a whim had walked out, accompanied by Lord Frederick St. Clair, and two officers of the guards.

While Lady Aucherly stopt to speak to the duchess, it gave the Miss Grimshaws an opportunity of addressing themselves to their perfidious friends.

"What, you would'nt know us just now," cried

cried Maria, "Ah! Sally Simmons, 'twasn't like you to treat one so."

"No more 'twasn't," added Miss Grimshaw, "and we shouldn't have slighted you so, if we had been walking with the Queen herself — we shouldn't."

As the Miss Simmonses perceived, that to persevere in cutting them, would ensure a torrent of abuse, they thought it best to endeavour to pacify them, and if possible to get rid of their company by fair means. Lady Aucherly walked on with the duchess, and the Miss Simmonses followed, accompanied by the Miss Grimshaws, whose vulgar tones could not fail of reaching the ears of Lady Aucherly's party, especially while the duchess spoke, whose accents were slow and soft.

"We do very often come into Bond-street," cried Miss Grimshaw, "and sometimes with our *beaux* — and Tom would have come with us to-day ——"

"And he'll be so sorry," interrupted her sister, "when he hears we've met *you*,

Jessy—and there you haven't told us all and about your gay doings last night."

"Lawk," said Miss Grimshaw, "we can't attend to that here, they shall come to us and give us all the purticlers—and there do you know Tom got it isterday for leaving the counter,—'cause you know Mr. Salmon, our clerk's dead."

"And there we went to see his corpse this morning," said Miss Maria—"and there he was laid out with ha'pence on his eyes and a plate of salt on his brist—and there he look'd so ghastly—did you ever see a corpse laid out, Jessy?"

"And there's to be such a handsome berrin!" added Miss Grimshaw, "and our volunteers are to fire over him—he was in the same company as Tom—and he's to be buried to-morror—so Tom's obligated to work to-day, to make up for isterday and to-morror too."

"I say, Jessy, who be they afore us, with your Aunt Archerly?" enquired Miss Maria.

"The Duchess of Montolieu and her sister."

"Bless

"Bless us!" cried Maria, "what a pleece she's got! and is that the fash?"

"To be sure 'tis," said her sister, "Lawk, o'me, well Cattern, it must be very pleasant for you to be all among the great folks."

"Laws," cried Maria, "what a clinkity clackity my patt'ns keeps—and nobody wears 'em here; but there 'twas so dirty in our part of the town—"

"I'll take mine off, and carry 'em," said Miss Grimshaw.

"Lar, so 'ou'd I too, if I had n't this great clumpitty umbereller to lug about," returned her sister, scuffing along, and striking the point of her patten on the pavement to keep it on firm, "Laws! 'tis got so loose," added she, stooping to tie the string, while the others walked on.

A scream made the whole party turn round, and they perceived Miss Maria Grimshaw pecked forwards on her hands: she had so suddenly stopt to tighten her patten string, that the Marquis of Haughton and Lord John Lennard, not aware of her

 design,

design, and hastening towards Lady Aucherly, very nearly walked over her, as well as having occasioned her fall.

The gentlemen made every apology they could, but Miss Grimshaw, fired at the supposed insult offered to her sister, exclaimed, "Gentlemen, indeed! — unmannerly ones at best."

"'Twas my faut, 'twas my faut, Hetty, and I b'ain't hurt," cried Maria, quickening her pace, to overtake the Miss Simmonses, while the street echoed with the noise of her pattens.

The marquis in passing them, again hoped the lady had received no hurt.

"Oh laws, no, sir," said Maria, simpering, and rubbing her knee, as she walked on.

"People can't see," muttered Miss Grimshaw.

"Hush!" cried her sister, observing the marquis joined Lady Aucherly's party — "Laws, who can he be — why Sally Simmons how mum you be, can't 'e tell us who 'tis?"

"I don't

"I don't know who he is," replied Sarah fretfully.

"Lars lov'e, you needn't be so snappish—why he's speaking to your Aunt Archerly—and look, he's poking his nose into your cousin Cat'line's face, I suppose he's near sighted."

"Oh, lawk! they're all near sighted now-a-days," observed Miss Grimshaw.

"Lars, well," cried Maria, "I'll have a spy glass too, as well as the rest of 'em—Lar! look, Sally Simmons—I say, Sa'lee! Sa'lee! do look at that there young chap in his giggimy thing, standing up, like one of Astley's folks—there, don't'e see, out yander."

"Why 'tis a Pheaton, ain't it?" said Miss Grimshaw.

"Lor, well—look at un—d'ye see what he's got on?—lawk, and if their bain't four differ'nt coloured hosses—bless us, and so be the wheels; lor, if ever I see such a quare thing, and d'ye see how he's dress'd, well I say *he is* a Jemmy, a proper Jemmy, aint he—look at his jackut!"

"'Tis

"'Tis Sir Cæsar Devereux," said Catherine.

"Lor, well, and who be he—he's *somebody* I suppose."

"Don't you think it's going to rain, Miss Grimshaw?" said Jessy, hoping to lead them to think of going home.

"Rain! lawk, 'ton't rain, while there's blue sky enough to make a Dutchman a pair of breeches."

Lady Aucherly could no longer endure the vulgar volubility behind her, though she affected to join in the mirth which it excited among her party, and as they passed Owen and Bentley's proposed having some fruit.

"With all my heart," said the duchess, "I was never more inclined for some grapes."

Lady Aucherly concluded that the Miss Grimshaws would no longer intrude themselves, but instead of their taking leave of the Miss Simmonses, as they followed Lady Aucherly into the shop, Miss Grimshaw

 ex-

exclaimed, "Lawks! what you're going to have fruit, are'e?".

"Laws, 'twill be very pleasant," said her sister, "and some of they peers will be nice and quenching."

"Lawks, here's nice apples!" cried Miss Grimshaw, as they entered the shop, "will'e have some — my eye! if there b'ain't green goosegogs — I must have a ha'puth —"

"Now Hetty, you take keer, 'member how bad you was to'ther day after the gooseberry pudd'n."

"Lar well — I'oudn't minds that, I d' love 'em so — but there, I shan't go giving silver, for what I can get another time for ha'pence, I can promise'e — perhaps master, you'd let me taste one for nothing, as our party be laying out so much with'e — lor, thank'e sure, sir."

"How d'ye sell your peers, master?" said Miss Maria, taking up one, and biting a piece.

"Ninepence each," replied the shopman.

"Ninepence!" exclaimed Maria, with agita-

agitation, "why 'tain't possible — d'ye hear that, Hetty — don't take any peers, the man says they're ninepence *apiece!*"

"Gracious me!" said Miss Grimshaw, "'tis a cheat — ninepence for a peer! — I never heard tell o'such a thing; did you Sally Simmons?" added she, turning to Sarah, who, ashamed of their behaviour, returned a short answer, with many sulky looks, while Jessy gave another broad hint to get them gone, by asking, whether they knew how late it was.

"Oh, 'tis past our dinner time," returned Miss Grimshaw, "so 'tain't much odds now."

"And we had a bit o'cold poork for nunch," added her sister.

"But your father will certainly be wondering — "

"And you've a great way to go," said Sarah, pettishly.

"There's passion!" exclaimed Miss Grimshaw.

"Oh, Sally Simmons always was fiery," added Maria.

"Such

"Such pride!" returned the eldest—"they want us gone, I can see that with half a eye."

"Gracious me! how some folks are chang'd," cried Maria.

"I'd scarn to meet an old friend with a new face," observed her sister.

"You really grow impertinent, Miss Grimshaw," said Jessy.

"Fie! fie! Miss Jessy, is that *you*?"

"What wickedness!" cried Maria.

"Tinder heart!" exclaimed Miss Grimshaw, "I shall expect to see the ceiling fall in upon us all: you've larn't these airs, I suppose," added she, in a higher key, "from my Aunt Archerly!"

"We are very glad to see you," said Catherine, hoping to appease them, "but we are engaged now with Lady Aucherly."

"And if you are, is that any reason why you should treat *us* in this manner; arn't we as good as *you* pray?"

"And wasn't our grandfather the *making* of Mr. Simmons?" cried Maria.

"You know he was," added Miss Grimshaw

shaw— "he was but a poor 'prentice to him, and——"

"And haven't you been for weeks at our house," interrupted her sister, "and so happy!—and such friends as we was!"

"And then!" cried Miss Grimshaw, pathetically flapping her spread hand in the air, "and then! to treat us like this!—"

"Oh, Sally Simmons! Sally Simmons!" exclaimed Maria, almost crying.

"Come, Marier," said Miss Grimshaw, "let's go, I'm sick of this ingratitude; mind the umbreller, Marier," saying this, she was hurrying away, when the shopman called her back with "Miss, the apples are not paid for—"

"Laws so, master, you needn't be so sharp—I wasn't going to cheat'e—'twas on'y a forget—how much is it," continued Miss Grimshaw, feeling her pocket for money.

"How many apples have you had, miss?"

"Goodness me," cried Miss Grimshaw, in accents of real alarm, "goodness me, I can't find my pus—Lors heart, I hope to goodness I ha'n't a had my pockut pick't," con-

continued she, while her apprehensions increased, and her agitation rendering her search for her purse ineffectual, she resolved to have ocular demonstration, and prudently emptied her pockets on the counter, which now exhibited an old needle-case, a nutmeg grater, a piece of sealing-wax, a small paper parcel, and a variety of other articles, while her thimble falling to the ground rolled under the duchess's chair.

"Oh lawk!" exclaimed Miss Grimshaw, "I beg your pardon, my lady, I'm sure, to disturb 'e—but my thimble, ma'am, is—"

"Here it is," said one of the officers, who was playing with two Italian greyhounds of the duchess's, and popping his little finger into it, so presented it to her.

"Thank'e, sure, sir;" returned Miss Grimshaw, giggling, "it just fits your little finger—Lawk! if I don't recollect somebody very like you—zackly the same *heye*—to be sure it can't be, you ain't so jolly, that's again it—besides you're in the mirlitiar, and this young man was a hensign, in a hoss ridge-

ridgement—the *Hillian Skillians** b'lieve—to be sure that's nothing—it might be—your name ain't Pooley, is it? Stiv'n Pooley?"

"I'm afraid I can't have the pleasure of being your *Hillian Skillian* friend; my name's Douglas John Maxwell, and *that's again it.*"

"Lar it's very odd then, for you be as like as two peas—your very woice and manner and all—lar, and I d' remember as well as if 'twas but isterday, hugh! hugh! I say, Marier! 'm 'ether, whisper—"

This was followed by a burst of laughter from both the sisters.

"Lor, how you do go on laughing, forgetting all your troubles—have'e found your pus, Hetty? lar, it gives one a fright."

"Oh, pray don't trouble yourself about paying," said Captain Maxwell, "I've a long bill here, Mr. Owen shall put it down to me, and as I'm so like *Hensign* Pooley, you can't object."

"No, thank'e, sir," said Miss Grimshaw,

* Meaning, it is presumed, the 6th or Inniskillen Dragoons.

drawing

drawing up, while she seemed to be feeling all over her dress for her purse, which she at last found in her bosom, "Not so neither," added Miss Grimshaw, opening her leather purse—"and father wouldn't hear of such a thing—lor, how we've been treated by them Simmonses—I declared it make one's whole blood bile—"

"Come, Hetty, make haste," cried Maria impatiently, while, as she stood holding the shop-door ajar, an old beggar-man insinuated himself into the shop.

"Good G—d! what a hideous wretch!" exclaimed Miss Adair.

"Walk off," said a shopman.

"We've nothing for you," drawled the Duchess of Montolieu, while the juice of the peach she was eating ran streaming down her delicate fingers.

"There's nothing for you, master," cried Miss Maria, "so now you've had your answer—it's no use for you to stay, for we can't go giving; *can* us, my lady?"

The shopman threatened to send for a parish officer, if the man did not depart, but

as the mendicant persevered in appealing to their humanity, the gentlemen interfered and sent him off, not however before Caroline had unobserved slipt a shilling into his hat.

While Miss Grimshaw was settling with the shopman, complaining loudly of the *monstrous* high price at which every thing was charged, the duchess whispered to Lady Aucherly, " I quite enjoy these oddities—when my sister gave the marquis and me an account of their morning visit to you, I had no hope of being fortunate enough to be present at a similar exhibition — we must contrive to keep them here a little longer."

" Oh, 'twill be rare sport," cried Miss Adair.

" Indeed," said Lady Aucherly, " their vulgarity is far from amusing — my nieces have unfortunately been too condescending —and these young women, taking advantage of it, push themselves into their company."

" Well, well, we'll punish them," returned Miss Adair.

" You'll

"You'll get the worst of it."

"Oh, never fear."

"Pray, Miss —— " said the duchess to Miss Grimshaw, "will you allow me to admire your gown?"

"Oh, laws, sure, ma'am," replied Miss Grimshaw, duped by the sincerity of the look and tone assumed by the duchess, "'twas a great bargain, ma'am," continued Miss Grimshaw, putting her hand through her pocket-hole, and spreading out the muslin to shew the pattern, which was a large sprig, at considerable distances, "it come but to two-and-two-pence a yard, hell wide."

"Two-and-sixpence," said her sister.

"Ah, so 'twas; he bated me the groat, 'cause we was old friends."

"It's very pretty and simple," said Miss Adair, "and I should like a gown of it vastly."

"I dare say, my lady, 'tain't all gone — and if you mention my name, and ask for the young man, Mr. *Henery*, he'd let'e have it at the two-and-two-pence — better say nothing to his father: old Gruffy, we do call him."

"Lars

"Lars lov'e," cried Miss Maria, "can't we buy it for the lady, and then there'll be no *beefstakes* made; ha! ha! haw! 'tou'd be hawkward for her to get herself into a hobble."

"I'm sure, my lady," said Miss Grimshaw, "I shall be proud to do such a job for'e."

"On second thoughts," said Miss Adair, "your sister's would suit me best—I didn't observe it before, but I'm mightily taken with it."

"*There* now, Marier," cried Miss Grimshaw; "do you know, my lady, she had a great mind not to come out in it, 'cause I had a white un on, and I told her, many genteel people wore colour'd gowns of a morning."

"And her's is a sweet colour," drawled the duchess.

"'Twas a pretty thing when 'twas new, ma'am," said Miss Maria, "'tis faded now."

"Oh, it's bright enough;" said Miss Adair, "the only fault I can find with it, is,

that

that it looks as if the mustard pot had been thrown over it; it's made up very fashionably."

"I'm glad you like it, my lady," returned Maria, "Ah, and you saw my pretty gown as I wore t'other morning, to Lady Archerly's."

"Oh, nothing was lost upon Miss Adair," said the marquis, "she gave a full account of it all."

"And pray *Miss*," said the duchess, "who might have the honour of making your robe."

"Mrs. Fry, ma'am, she's a fancy dressmaker, No. 108, Holborn."

"I'm much obliged," returned the duchess, "as I shall now," continued she, turning to the marquis, and lowering her voice, "take care not to employ her."

"Whose glove is this?" cried Lord John Lennard, taking up a long one of a dark olive colour (which he had been for some time treading upon) and dangling it round to the company, on the end of his stick, "who has lost a glove?"

"I fancy it belongs to one of those ladies," said her grace.

"Oh, it's mine, sir," said Miss Grimshaw, half offended, and snatching it from the end of the stick.

"And here's what is left, of the fellow to it," said the marquis, taking up one of the duchess's lap dogs, with the glove in its mouth, "Beda and Shaccabac have been making a hearty *nunch* off it, and they say they like it full as well as *cold poork*."

"Oh, poor Beda!" drawled the duchess, "'twill make her sick."

"Such treatment!" exclaimed Miss Grimshaw, enraged at the loud laugh which burst from the whole party, and beginning to suspect she was made a butt, "such treatment I'll never put up with."

"Quality, indeed!" cried Miss Maria, siding with her sister, and hastening out of the shop.

"They ought to learn manners," muttered Miss Grimshaw, as she made her exit.

The laugh continued for a long time, as

the

the marquis occasionally introduced imitations of the Miss Grimshaws' voices and conversation, to the great entertainment of his friends.

A splendid equipage now stopt at the door, and as a lady was alighting from it, Lady Aucherly enquired of the duchess who it was.

"The Marchioness of Arrangford," drawled her grace.

"*Such* a ——" Miss Adair stopt as the marchioness entered, who, in a loud voice, enquired for Mr. Owen, adding, in angry accents, "if he ever serves me so again I'll never enter his shop," then, perceiving the duchess, she softened the asperity of her tones — "the pines he sent me were not worth cutting — and I shall expect a great allowance made for them — your grace I see has been trying some of these wretched pines —"

"They won't have a high flavour, my lady," said the shopman, "'till we have more sun."

"Ah, there's always some excuse: trades-

 people

people are never at a loss; but if I'm not served better another time, I'll try elsewhere — and how is your grace, after the mob last night — weren't you almost killed — I never was half so tired — such an ill-managed —"

"We thought it a very spirited affair," said the duchess, "but rather too crowded."

"All the world was there," added her sister.

"Without any selection," interrupted the marchioness, "'twas quite a bear-garden — had I but suspected what I was to suffer, I never would have gone — my carriage was kept an hour in Cavendish-Street, before it could pass, and was very near meeting with another accident."

"Portland-Place to be sure, was in a complete uproar," said Miss Adair, "and the blaze of flambeaux illuminated the whole street."

"I didn't get there 'till eleven," continued the marchioness, adding with an ill-natured laugh, "what a ridiculous attempt at an orange grove!"

"In-

"Indeed," replied the duchess, "we thought it had a charming effect; but 'twas a pity to place such fine trees where they must be inevitably injured."

"Oh, people pluck'd the blossoms and young fruit without ceremony, cried the marchioness, "I pelted Sir Cæsar Devereux with all I could gather."

"The supper was extremely elegant."

"Yes, but I never saw so many strange faces before, and such a lack of fine women!" continued the marchioness, taking a frowning survey of Lady Aucherly and Caroline—"there was hardly a pretty girl there—a Miss O'Connor was the *most* admired—but, she's nobody—and has a cast in her eye, hasn't she—shall you be at the new opera to-night—I'm told it's not worth going to see, but I believe I shall look in for half an hour before I go to Lady Grey and Greville's."

"We are not going to her ladyship's," said Miss Adair—"her parties are grown rather stupid."

"I never thought them otherwise," re-

turned the marchioness, "you know, she can get no young men to come to her house."

"And where there are no men, of course it must be stupid," said Miss Adair, half ironically.

"They all think they're ask'd to make love to the Lady Fothergills — isn't that the case, marquis?"

"Faith, they save us the trouble, they make love to us."

Ha! ha! ha! — very good," cried the marchioness, "how I should enjoy seeing the Lady Alicia Jemima Fothergill making love to your lordship — ar'n't they irresistible? oh, you must take compassion on their case, ha! ha! ha!"

"I'm afraid" said Lord John, "the marquis has no pity that way — the Lady Fothergills must look out elsewhere."

"By all accounts," said the duchess, "poor Lady Grey and Greville has taken pains enough."

"What a wither'd look she has," said the marchioness.

"She

"She always reminds me," said the Marquis of Haughton, "of Queen Elizabeth, in wax-work, at Westminster-Abbey."

"Lord!" exclaimed the marchioness, with a spiteful laugh, "I never see her, with her skinny progeny, without thinking of Gay's court of death, ha! ha! ha!—or Surgeon's-Hall—ha! ha! ha!—and did you observe, duchess, how they were made out last-night—ha! ha! ha! their bosoms, ha! ha! I mean—a friend of mine, declares he thrust a corking pin, ha! ha! ha!—by way of experiment—ha! ha! ha!—but 'twas very well protected with cotton, ha! ha! ha!"

"If similar experiments were put in general practice," said Lord John, "there are many ladies who would protest against them."

"What a rude remark!" cried Miss Adair, "but I hope you'd allow us to return the compliment upon your sex, and I've no doubt we should reduce a great many athletic herculean figures to mere phantoms."

"Fanny is an excellent advocate for us," said the duchess, "did you hear how late the ball was kept up last night?"

 "I was

"I was heartily glad to get away by five," replied the marchioness, "many were there 'till seven."

"I was," said Captain Maxwell, "and the Bentleys, and the opera dancers."

"Oh, you mean Lady Westenra, and her sister Miss ——"

"Miss Fortescue," said Lord John—"she is an elegant figure to trip it on the light fantastic toe."

"I don't know what sort of toes she has," said the marchioness, "but I know her foot is heavy enough; she almost crush'd mine, as she vaulted by me like a kangaroo."

"Mrs. Yorke too, staid late I heard," said Miss Adair.

"Oh, the gypsies were really a nuisance," continued the marchioness.

"They were quite in character," said the duchess.

"As for Mrs. and Miss Yorke, they needed no walnut juice to darken them, their skin is ready done," saying this the marchioness returned to her carriage, renewing

newing her threat to Mr. Owen, of never entering his shop again.

The duchess made some remark on the temper of the marchioness, to which Lady Aucherly only replied by a shrewd smile. She recollected her about five years ago, as Lady Frances Kirby, who was then in her eight and thirtieth year, and so notorious for a bad temper, that no man was bold enough, notwithstanding her prospect of a large fortune, to run the risk of marrying a termagant: she had therefore continued a spinster till the death of her father, when a poor spendthrift of a Marquis of Arrangford was glad on any terms to secure the rich heiress.

"My brother has just passed the shop," said Caroline, to her mother.

"He's probably looking for us," returned Lady Aucherly, "Lord John, will you call him back."

William had hastened from Mr. Dorrington's to Portman-square, and having learnt where Lady Aucherly was gone, he traced her to Bond-street, and was beginning to

despair

despair of seeing her before he returned to Oxford, when Lord John Lennard called after him.

Lady Aucherly wondered he had not called earlier in Portman-square, and on his thoughtlessly saying he had been at the Dorringtons', she could not help concluding, after what she had witnessed the preceding evening, that Emily was the object of his visit.

That her son should make such a choice, would have given her inexpressible uneasiness, but she hoped it was a mere boyish partiality that would be effaced by the next beauty that came in his way: not that Emily was in any degree obnoxious to her ladyship, farther than as an unimportant being, whose alliance would shed no lustre on his family. Lady Aucherly looked forwards to her son's forming a brilliant connection, which would place him in a sphere, from which even herself might derive increased consequence. Her ambitious views for her daughter, have been already hinted at; she perceived with pleasure that the Marquis of

Haughton

Haughton had himself solicited the introduction to her at Mrs. Grosvenor's, and had paid her distinguished marks of attention; and, as the marquis, besides his rank and splendid fortune, possessed a handsome person, she felt secure of her daughter's concurrence: she was therefore bent upon the accomplishment of the union, and entertained very sanguine hopes that with skilful management it might be brought about.

On her return home, she was gratified to find he had left his name, and in the evening at the opera, she could hardly keep her satisfaction within bounds, at finding he contrived to get a place next to Caroline, and attached himself to her party the whole evening, while two or three of her friends congratulated her ladyship on the occasion; adding, that it was whispered over the house, that the marriage was a settled thing.

Lady Aucherly retired to rest with the pleasing idea of her daughter's future greatness, and dropt asleep while the "Marchioness of Haughton," dwelt on her mind's ear.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUDDEN DEATH — A SUNDAY CONCERT.

LADY AUCHERLY having arranged her plan for the intended ball, cards were issued to about a hundred and fifty fashionables, and the preparations were in a state of great forwardness on the preceding Saturday, when Mrs. Macmaurice came running in to Lady Aucherly, and in a deranged manner, exclaiming, "Oh, L—d G—d! Lady Aucherly, have you heard—"

Lady Aucherly was struck speechless with astonishment.

"Isabella's ruin'd—I'm just come from Portland-place, and the house is infested with bailiffs—I haven't seen her—and as for

Grosvenor, I fear they've taken him to prison, L—d, what will become of them all — I'm almost distracted, I —"

Lady Aucherly attempted to pacify her, and endeavoured to persuade her that Mr. Grosvenor's affairs might not be so bad as they were represented.

"O no, I fear they are as bad as possible— what will become of Isabella, and all those children — such a family, ten of them — something must be done for the boys — they must all go into the army; L—d, what a mercy 'twould have been, if they had come into the world six-feet high, ready dress'd in regimentals — poor Isabella, 'twill certainly break her heart — I can't see 'em starve you know — I'll go to Louisa — she has no child — but she's so close."

"Oh, no doubt she will assist Mrs. Grosvenor — you'll find my brother will not be behind hand in doing every thing in his power to ——"

"Ah, I know he has a good heart — as for me, I shall save every thing I can — I durstn't ask Mac. for a guinea just now — he's in the

worst

worst temper I ever knew him—his disappointment in being promoted, has made him, as——and 'tis very vexing I must say; then he has been losing every thing lately at play—he lost upwards of a thousand pounds, while we made that short stay at Bath—and I'm afraid to guess what he has lost since we've been here—he was out all Thursday night, and came home about three the next day, in such a humour! and as the devil would have it, Mrs. Dorrington and all of them, had called that morning; their cards were lying on the table—he look'd at them, and you can't think what a passion he flew in—I told him I couldn't help their chusing to call—I can't conceive what should make him dislike them so—*I* don't like them—but then I don't care a straw about their calling—but Mac. was in such a rage, and swore I should not be acquainted with them—but 'tisn't likely we shall, you know—I must of course return the visit, and there'll be an end of it; we shall be going to the regiment very soon, and may never meet them again, perhaps.—How provoking 'tis, this

this cursed affair should happen just before your dance—I shan't be able to come."

"Oh, I hope," said Lady Aucherly, "Mr. Grosvenor's affairs will turn out better than you expect—I'd advise you to put a good face on the business—it's no uncommon thing; but by not shewing yourself, people will think it worse than it is.

The splendour of the style in which the Grosvenors lived, had always afforded Lady Aucherly a gratification, in consequence of the family connexion between them, and she felt seriously mortified that at her ball, the derangement in Mr. Grosvenor's affairs would be still so recent, that the subject would most probably be continually discussed. The fates, however, had decreed that her ball should not take place: the next morning the Dowager Lady Aucherly's woman came to Sir Philip with the melancholy intelligence that her lady had been found dead in her bed.

The baronet hastened to Hanover-square, with the best medical aid he could procure,

but

but all to no purpose — life could not be restored.

This event and the crash in Portland-place, were not generally known till the next day; but at Mrs. Monckton's concert, a full account was brought by the Marchioness of Arrangford, who entered with a very important countenance, and brushing by two or three insignificant creatures, hastened on to Mrs. Monckton.

"Now this is very kind, marchioness —"

"I can't stay a minute — I'm engaged this evening to Mrs. Pickerell's, but as I passed by, I thought I would just look in — have you heard the news?"

"What? what? dear marchioness," cried Mrs. Monckton.

"It's all over, in Portland-place!"

"What, at the Grosvenors? I thought 'twould come to this."

"Oh, I've long expected it," said Lady Garston.

"There were two executions in the house at the very time of the masquerade,"

said

said General Stackhurst, "and one of them, at the suit of a gentleman whose wife and daughters were there."

"Law! how comical, somehow!" cried Mrs. Mansell.

"I thought such expensive entertainments couldn't last for ever," said Mrs. Monckton, "it really serves them right for their extravagance — and with such a family!"

"Nothing was too good for the Grosvenors," added Lady Garston, "they had their house entirely new furnish'd this winter, in the most superb style."

"Oh, but their extravagance about their cottage at Blackheath, is beyond every thing," said Mrs. Monckton, "one room is lined with large mirrors, and two windows down to the ground had one entire pane of plate glass —"

"Ah, I heard of that," said Mrs. Stackhurst, "the Duchess of Montolieu's son, the little Marquis of Hexham, thinking it was an open window, ran through it into the garden, and was terribly cut."

"And their service of gilt plate too!" cried

cried Miss Cosgrave, an elder sister of Mrs. Monckton's.

"Now, to mention a small piece of extravagance," said Mrs. Mansell, "do you know, they had pine-apples, preserved ginger, and green sweetmeats, all minc'd up like, for their Christmas pies."

"And what sums he has laid out upon his pinery!"

"And how she dresses!"

"Oh, what *beautiful* diamonds she has!" cried Mrs. Mansell.

"She has two sets," returned Mrs. Monckton, "and did you observe the dress she wore at the masquerade?"

"Oh, law, what a sweet lace tunic, and the pale pink, to shew it off."

"That dress cost five hundred pounds; 'tis all Brussels lace, ma'am."

"She looked very well I thought," said Mrs. Stackhurst, "and her children such pretty little Cupids."

"I warrant," said the marchioness, "she hoped to be taken for Venus; but with her clumsy figure—"

"Nay,

"Nay, marchioness —"

"Well, she is no Venus — fine feathers may make fine birds — but she can't be called a good figure."

"I've heard," said Mr. Mansell, "that their extravagance is all owing to *Mr.* Grosvenor."

"And it's really unpardonable in him, with such a large family," added Lady Garston — "it's fortunate, however, he is not addicted to play — but he has a variety of other ways of getting rid of his money — what with horses and carriages and —"

"He has never been without twenty blood-horses," said Mr. Monckton, "and his hounds and hunting-seat in Hampshire, and his —"

"Oh, I don't wonder at his coming to ruin."

"How could it be otherwise, unless he could contrive to make ten thousand a-year go as far as twenty."

"L—d, sir!" exclaimed the marchioness, "he has been mortgaging his estates, 'till I don't believe he's worth a shilling — I wonder

der how he supported such a dash so long—I never thought much of them, for my part; but these West Indians——"

"Mauam!" croaked an old creole lady, who sat by the door.

"Well, ma'am," cried the marchioness, tossing back her head, which knocked a cup of coffee out of Mr. Mansell's hand, "well, ma'am, I meant no harm."

"You need not take fire so, then," returned the old creole.

The marchioness turned contemptuously away from her, and addressed herself to Mrs. Monckton, "and have you heard. ma'am, the Dowager Lady Aucherly's dead."

"Good God! how sudden," exclaimed Mrs. Monckton.

"Law," said Mrs. Mansell, "now then we shall see Lady Aucherly come out in diamonds, after her mourning, you know; for she'll have all the old lady's jewels—and beautiful ones they were."

"When did she die?" enquired Lady Garston.

"Only this morning," returned the marchioness,

chioness, "she ate a hearty supper last night, and went to bed as usual; she had been very well all yesterday, and was found dead in her bed this morning."

"Something poison'd her perhaps."

"Oh, more likely," said the marchioness, "she ate too much—she was always greedy—how I've seen that woman eat—she made herself so ill in eating fish last Lent, that the physicians gave her over."

"I wonder what her supper was last night," said Mrs. Mansell.

"Beef-tails, ma'am," replied the marchioness, "beef-tails—I had it from my woman, who heard it from the old lady's butler."

"It's unlucky she should die just at this time," observed Mrs. Fortescue, "for Lady Aucherly must put off her ball."

"Ah, and just as Miss Aucherly's come out," said Mrs. Mansell, "to be obliged to be all in mourning you know."

"Is there any truth," said Mrs. Stackhurst, "in the report that the Marquis of

of Haughton is paying his addresses to her?"

"I don't believe a word of it," replied the Marchioness of Arrangford—"the marquis has more sense than to connect himself with such a family—that Lady Aucherly gives herself such intolerable airs—I believe she thinks the ground isn't good enough for her to walk upon—and such a capricious—vain—lump of affectation—"

"She is certainly affected," said Mrs. Monckton.

"Oh, when you come to know her," said Mrs. Mansell, "you'd find her a charming pleasant woman: *I* that know her so well, like, must know her you know; because, living so near, in the country at East Compton, we're so intimate, like, that I can assure you, she is very different somehow, to what may be thought of her, and Miss Aucherly too, is such a sweet, pretty—"

"She's well enough," said the marchioness, "but, L—d, there are hundreds of girls

just

just as handsome—and Lord Starfort, who is a great *connoisseur* in beauty, says her shoulders are too wide—I heard him say so—and I'm sure she's a bold looking girl."

"She has a great deal of animation in her countenance," said Mrs. Stackhurst, "but she can't be call'd bold, I think:—has Lady Aucherly any other daughter?"

"No," replied Mrs. Monckton; "and I believe there is only one son."

"She lost several children while they were very young," said Mrs. Mansell.

"Ah," cried the marchioness, "I've no doubt while she used to be so gay here, her poor children were cruelly neglected—there ought to be a punishment inflicted on such mothers."

"A little girl, I think, died in the small pox," said Mr. Mansell; "*that*, you know, she could'nt help."

"But she was glad of it," returned the marchioness, "the child promised to turn out very plain, and I was told, Lady Aucherly thought it a mercy that the little wretch

wretch died, as it would most likely be terribly mark'd."

"We must not give credit," observed Mrs. Stackhurst, "to all the reports we hear injurious to the character of others, without at least giving them an opportunity of answering them."

The marchioness, who had only a minute to spare from a card-party at Mrs. Pickerell's, found the employment of telling bad news, and of imparting malicious insinuations, so delightful, that she staid nearly an hour before she thought of going.

As soon as her back was turned, the whole company joined against her.

"She is, the—*most*—spiteful creature, in the world," cried Lady Garston.

"Oh, she enjoys other people's misfortunes to her heart," returned Miss Cosgrave; "I never met with such a vinegar temper."

"The cream in my tea, ma'am," said Mrs. Gwynne, "turn'd sour the moment she entered the room."

"It's really curious to observe," said Mrs. Stackhurst, "how soon she picks up all the

the bad news; one would think she employed a spy—"

"I never heard her, in my life, say any thing to the advantage of another," observed Mrs. Fortescue, "unless with a view more keenly to wound the feelings of some one in her hearing: isn't she grown very scorbutic lately?"

"Scorbutic!" cried Miss Cosgrave with a mysterious air.

"She has several red blotches about her face," said Mrs. Gwynne, "but she contrives to conceal them pretty well, by artfully rouging *between* each pimple."

"And her nose is got so red!" returned Miss Cosgrave, looking still more mysteriously, while her next neighbour, fearing the insinuation would not be understood, imitated the action of carrying a glass of wine to the lips.

"Oh, 'tis too bad!" exclaimed Lady Garston.

"Yes, I've suspected her of that," said Mrs. Mansell.

 "There

"There was not a doubt of it this evening;" replied her ladyship, "did you observe how she knock'd down Mr. Mansell's cup and saucer."

"Oh," cried Mrs. Gwynne, "her breath was enough to do that."

"For my part," said the old creole, who sat partly concealed behind the half opened door, "for my part, I thought, as she entered the room, a rum cask had been rolled in! the scent first wafted through the hinges of the door, and as she passed me, 'twas as if the bung had burst! — 'twas enough to intoxicate a young child."

"The poor marquis leads a terrible life, I hear."

"Oh," returned Mrs. Monckton, "she does what she pleases, and as she takes delight in tormenting every body, of course he comes in for his share: I fancy they live little better than cat and dog — she has a vile temper."

After the party had railed against the marchioness till tea was over, they were

enter-

entertained for an hour or two with sacred music.

Instances of sudden death occur so frequently, that though they ought to teach a most awful lesson to mankind, and more particularly to the thoughtless votaries of dissipation, yet they too often pass without making any serious or lasting impression: Sir Philip Aucherly, however, was deeply affected at the death of his mother, though her conduct towards him had ever been more calculated to inspire respect than filial affection.

Lady Aucherly too, was much shocked at the intelligence, but any serious impression it made, was of very short duration: the *consequences* resulting from the dowager's death, soon diverted her attention from the event itself. She felt much disappointed at being obliged to give up her intended ball, which she thought might have forwarded

her

her plans with the Marquis of Haughton; she had cherished a hope that he had felt the power of Caroline's beauty; he had paid her very distinguished marks of attention at a grand rout at Lady Dorrington's; and at a dinner party at the Duke of Ulverston's, he sat by her and persevered in his assiduities.

The seclusion from company, which Lady Aucherly would now be obliged for some time to observe, would operate she feared, as a double blow to her wishes; for independently of the marquis's love cooling, and of his having time to engage in a new pursuit before Sir Philip would permit his daughter to appear again in company, she had every reason to apprehend the late event would hasten Sir Philip's return to Aucherly Park, which would at once frustrate her plans.

The late dowager had desired to be buried in Westminster Abbey, and Sir Philip finding himself in better health than he had been for a long time, determined to pay his last tribute of respect to the memory of his mother, by attending her funeral, and notwith-

withstanding a rainy day, he persisted in his determination. The dampness of the church brought on an attack of the gout, which promised to be long and obstinate. He bore his illness however with much fortitude, and the satisfaction of having his daughter constantly near him, enabled him to support a degree of cheerfulness, seldom attendant on a disease so excruciating.

In the mean time, Mr. Grosvenor's affairs had been investigated by his principal creditors, and it appeared on the representations of Messrs. Fenton, Oldborough, and Co. the merchants, who had been in the habit of receiving the produce of his estates in Jamaica, and who had stopt many a gap in his credit, by lending him money on mortgage, that his estates had lately suffered by a dreadful hurricane, and therefore they could make no farther advances, till advices should arrive from Jamaica, informing them of the extent of the damage.

It was, however, highly necessary that Mr. Grosvenor should immediately go to the West Indies, to look after his estates, and

and Messrs. Fenton and Co. had that confidence in his integrity, that they became security to the creditors, for his rendering a just account of his property.

A part of Mrs. Grosvenor's fortune had been prudently settled on her, and though very far from enabling her to live in the extravagant style, to which she had been lately accustomed, was amply sufficient to afford her every comfort, and during her husband's absence, she repaired with her young family, to a retired residence in the Isle of Wight.

Sir Philip Aucherly still continued in a very precarious state; and his disorder discovering fresh symptoms, his physicians began to be seriously alarmed, and delicately expressed their fears to Lady Aucherly, who immediately sent for her son. Sir Philip himself was impressed with an idea that he should not recover, and on being told his son was arrived, he concluded it was in consequence of his physicians thinking him in imminent danger. He, however, still maintained great serenity of mind;

mind; talked with his son on his studies at Oxford, and in the event of a peace, recommended him, after leaving the University, to travel for a year or two on the continent.

Lady Aucherly had been so long accustomed to see Sir Philip ill, that she had regarded his attack as one of those fits to which he was so subject; but on understanding the full extent of the physicians' fears, she became much agitated; the more so, as she had not till then entertained an idea that his illness would be likely to terminate fatally. She was now his constant attendant; she sat up at night with him; was ever studying his comfort, and endeavouring to procure him ease from his painful disorder; and notwithstanding she had never, perhaps, regarded him with that tender affection, which ought ever to accompany the conjugal state, yet she could not behold one whom she had once known in health and spirits, enjoying all the luxuries of life, promoting the happiness of his friends by his cheerful temper and hospitality,

tality, reduced to such a melancholy situation, without being deeply affected.

The physicians' greatest fear was, that the gout would get into his stomach; all their skill was directed to prevent it, but all their skill was in vain — Sir Philip Aucherly survived his mother only six weeks.

Lady Aucherly was removed with Caroline to Mrs. St. Clair's, and when she heard that the remains of Sir Philip had been conveyed to the family vault at East Compton, she recollected his words, '*at all events, I will return to the country early in the spring.*'

CHAP.

CHAPTER IX.

AUCHERLY PARK.

WILLIAM AUCHERLY attended the remains of his deceased father to East-Compton, and after the conclusion of the solemn ceremony, hastened to his mother, to afford her every consolation in his power.

Lady Aucherly determined to retire during her widowhood, to Aucherly Park; and after remaining some weeks at Mrs. St. Clair's, she took an affectionate leave of her sister, and set out with Caroline for Devonshire. William accompanied them half way; then bending his course towards Oxford, he promised to meet them at Aucherly Park, in the ensuing vacation. Lady Au-

Aucherly slept one night on the road, and at an early hour the next morning proceeded on her journey.

Her spirits, when she set out, were much depressed; travelling however, and change of scene had by degrees soothed her feelings, but as the carriage approached a grove of firs, which marked the commencement of the Aucherly estate, she again relapsed, and the continued plantations on either side the road, reminded her forcibly of Sir Philip, she sank back in the carriage to indulge her silent melancholy.

The old gothic tower, of East-Compton church now appeared at a distance, between the openings of the half foliaged woods of the park.

The Aucherly family were interred in this church, the tower of which suddenly obtruded on Lady Aucherly's sight, as the carriage turned a corner of the road; she drew down her veil, while Caroline's tears redoubled.

As they came nearer the village, the tenantry were at their windows to see the family

mily return; but as the carriage passed, they respectfully drew back, while groups of young children were seated before the cottage doors, staring with infantine curiosity at the mournful equipage.

On the bridge, at the end of the village, a grey-headed old man, who had formerly been a servant in the family, stood with his hat off, and with tears in his eyes, bowed to Lady Aucherly.

" 'Tis old Joseph," exclaimed Caroline.

Lady Aucherly noticed the old man, and again sank in the corner of the carriage.

Every object now increased her sadness, and as the lodge-gate clasped together, she forcibly felt the awful event that had taken place, since she had last heard the sound: she was then setting out with Sir Philip for Bath, in high spirits, anticipating the gaieties of that celebrated emporium of pleasure; Sir Philip was thoughtful, and she recollected, as the carriage had brushed by the luxuriant branches of a venerable oak, overhanging the lodge, and occasioned the fall

 of

of many a yellow leaf, he had moralized on the circumstance; she rallied him on his gravity, and smiled at the triteness of his remark.

The same tree was now clad in vivid green, and as the carriage brushed by its luxuriant branches, Sir Philip's words seemed whispered in her ear.

A setting sun breaking through thick clouds varied the character of the surrounding scenery: on one side, the wood was purpled with deepened shadow; here, a bright gleam animated different parts of the grounds, while the dappled deer skipping across the road, or reposing among the trees at a distance, considerably embellished the picturesque view; but Lady Aucherly was too much absorbed, to notice the romantic prospects which extended in every direction round the Park.

The carriage at length reached the plantation in the home-grounds, laid out under the immediate direction of Sir Philip; the lilac, guelder rose, and laburnum in full bloom, were waving their mingled beauties

in a gentle gust of wind; the brilliancy of their blossoms, was heightened by the bright rays of the sun, which, at the same time shining in an oblique direction on the house, distinctly marked the elegant gothic tracery of the building, and glanced upon the gilded achievement: Lady Aucherly quickly withdrew her eyes from the sight, nor lifted them again till the carriage stopt at the porch, where several of the upper servants were assembled to wait her commands.

Lady Aucherly alighted with her face hid in her handkerchief; she burst into tears as she passed the silent group, and her sobs were audible as she entered the sitting room, where flinging herself in the first seat, her grief became more violent.

Caroline had not been so much affected as her mother, at every memorial of Sir Philip which had presented itself, as they approached the house, but her affliction for the loss of her father, was deep and unceasing: she retired early to rest, and hastened to indulge her unfeigned sorrow in her own chamber.

The

The next morning Lady Aucherly was more composed, and assuming a becoming serenity, she entered her dressing room, rang for her woman, and as she took her accustomed seat, various reflections crowded on her mind. Now then, thought Lady Aucherly, I am my own mistress — I have no one to control my judgment — no one to consult — no one to oppose.

These ideas did not arise from an unnatural satisfaction that Sir Philip was no more; Lady Aucherly was really affected at his death: for though not a man of strong understanding, there were many amiable points in his character, which made him universally beloved and respected: he was particularly lenient towards his tenants; seldom raising their rents, and often remitting a part, in scarce seasons, and when the distresses of a large family required assistance.

He was an affectionate husband and father, and for many years after his marriage, his principal pleasure had been in promoting Lady Aucherly's happiness; she only hinted a wish, and it was complied with; but as

ill

ill health severely tries the temper, Sir Philip by degrees grew irritable, obstinate, and tenacious of his authority.

When a person of Sir Philip's character dies, it is natural for his friends to forget trifling blemishes, and to recall only the excellent traits in his disposition; Lady Aucherly well remembered how solicitous Sir Philip had once been for her happiness, and making allowances for his faults, her heart had overflowed at every memorial of one, who had been endeared to her by so many acts of kindness, but when the violence of her grief had subsided, and she was seated in her dressing-room, with a mind more composed, an association of ideas and various circumstances concurred to reconcile her to the loss she had sustained; even the prospect from the bow-window brought to her recollection many thoughts which she had indulged, while contemplating that same prospect in Sir Philip's life-time.

Her eyes had been fixed on that sheet of water, while, two years ago, she had been planning a journey to London, which he had opposed;

opposed; that spreading beech reminded her of an altercation with Sir Philip, respecting an entertainment given to the tenantry, and even the furniture of the room still bore testimony of Sir Philip's having lately objected to new furnishing the principal apartments.

As these reflections occurred, she could not help congratulating herself on her independence, though she took care, still to maintain a dignified sorrow. Caroline, not penetrating the depth of her mother's character, did every thing in her power to restore her to cheerfulness. In their walks, she would take her sketch book, and consult her mother in selecting a view: at home, she would read or have recourse to her music.

In the neighbourhood of East Compton, Lady Aucherly had acquired the reputation of being very humane and charitable, by attending, at no great trouble to herself, and at a trifling expence, to the necessities of several poor families in the village: to support her popularity, she sent Gifford soon after her return home, to make enquiries after

those

those who stood in need of relief; she even condescended to visit two or three herself, and one day walking with Caroline, as far as old Joseph's cottage, she proposed paying him a visit.

The old man had been one of the gardeners at Aucherly Park, and by prudent management had been able to save, while he was in service, a small matter to help him in his old age; he contrived too, with the occasional assistance of his son-in-law, to cultivate a bit of ground round his cottage, and by rearing fruit and vegetables, which he sold in the village, he made a comfortable addition to his little income. His wife had been dead many years, and about ten months ago he had buried his only child, a daughter who had left a large family of young children.

Some of them were playing in the garden as Lady Aucherly approached, and eagerly ran to open the wicket.

Old Joseph was overpowered with the honor. "Indeed, my lady, you are too

good,"

good," cried the old man, "please you my lady, to walk in and rest yourself."

"Thank you, my good friend," returned her ladyship, seating herself on a rustic bench in the garden, "and how are all your grand-children?"

"Hearty, thank God, please your ladyship, and Susan is a very good girl, and old enough now to take care of the little ones—and she goes to school too—and then comes my turn to be nurse."

Lady Aucherly praised the neat appearance of the children, and hoped their father behaved well towards them.

"Where does he work now," enquired Caroline.

"With Mr. Harding, the carpenter, my lady—yes sure, and John's a very good father to 'em, and his sister too, comes and looks after the children now and then—so we manage tolerable well, my lady—and little Sam lends me a help in the garden."

"It promises to repay you for your care," said Caroline, "what a luxuriant honey-

suckle,

suckle, you have, growing over that window."

"It must darken the room," observed Lady Aucherly, — "let me see, that used to be your little parlour, and you let it out last autumn, I think; what is become of your lodger pray?"

"Oh, he went away about Christmas, my lady, he said, perhaps he might come again, but there, I don't much expect 'un."

"You may probably be fortunate enough to meet with another," said Lady Aucherly, "you have every thing so neat about you, that your cottage is really an inviting retirement."

"I do what I can, my lady, to make it comfortable; would your ladyship please to walk in a bit?"

"Thank you, my good Joseph — we can't stay now."

"We'll come and see you another time;" added Caroline, "and make a longer visit."

Lady Aucherly returned home tired with her walk, and secretly much annoyed by the

the sameness of the stories of distress she had been obliged to listen to, of husbands too ill to work; of wives "just put to bed before the last child could walk; of children subject to fits; and of old grandmothers bed-ridden. Consoling herself however with the thoughts that her condescension wold make a lasting impression, she gave Gifford directions for attending to their relief.

While Caroline was enjoying the pleasures of the country, Emily was partaking of the gaieties of town, for in spite of a very fine June, the London world seemed determined to consider it still winter, Mrs. Dorrington had given a very large rout, and the Marchioness of Shirehampton had collected a fashionable crowd to a splendid ball, but expectation was now on tip-toe, on a magnificent *fête*'s being announced at Villa-Yorke.

"I hear," said Miss St. Clair at a large dinner party at Montolieu house, "Mrs. Yorke has been all the winter planning this *al fresco* ball —"

"Great preparations are certainly making,"

ing," said the duke, "and in the course of the evening, we are to have an infinite variety of amusements: in the first place we are to be welcomed in the pavilion on the lawn with a concert — after that a display of fireworks —"

"Then comes Miss Yorke's tragedy, that we hear so much about," drawled the Duchess of Launceston, "and I understand, Sir Cæsar Devereux is to take a part."

"Are you perfect yet, Sir Cæsar?" enquired Miss St. Clair, "is it a well written play?"

Sir Cæsar hesitated and began, "Oh, indeed — I think —" he paused — "it's certainly a — but every one must judge for himself —"

"Are we to be favoured with Sir Cæsar's sentiments?" enquired Miss St. Clair.

"Oh you know," returned the baronet, "it depends — so much you know — upon — people's fancy — that — for my pawt — I think it's an excellent teagedy —"

"Is it in the French or English school?"

"Oh, 'tis in English."

"Is

"Is it on the Greek model or in Shakespeare's style?" continued Miss St. Clair, with a satirical smile.

"Oh, indeed, I don't know — I have n't read the play all through, pawticulawly; I've only studied my pawt —"

"Then you must have a *perfect* conception of it — well we'll suspend our judgments on the merits of the piece, till we see it represented. — Is it all written by Miss Yorke?"

"Oh yes, 'tis chiefly Hawyet's — though I believe Mrs. Yorke and Constantia lent some assistance."

"Constantia!" exclaimed the Countess of Hillingdon, "I presume you mean Lady Windermere."

"She is the last person," observed Miss St. Clair, "I should suspect of writing a tragedy."

"Oh, when I say she had a hand in it," said Sir Cæsar, "I don't know for certain — I only know, she yote out my pawt —"

"That indeed," returned Miss St. Clair, "proves her to be an extraordinary genius."

"What

"What a little creature this Constantia is," — observed the Duke of Montolieu.

"Little creature!" echoed Mr. Jones.

"Quite a dwarfess," cried Major Lethbridge — "a Lilliputian angel — a pocket Venus."

"What a long visit she has paid at Villa-Yorke," said Lady Hillingdon, "what do she do there, Sir Cæsar?"

"Oh, they're so fond of the little widow, said he with an accompanying laugh.

"Their intimacy appears to me unaccountable," continued the countess, "for the little widow's baby manners are so opposite to your *Hawyet* Yorke's —"

"You shan't abuse them so," eagerly interrupted the baronet.

"I beg your pardon, Sir Cæsar, for conjuring up those eloquent blushes — but — pray — when are you to be married?"

"Lawd! Lady Hillingdon, what a question — I can't tell — it's quite uncertain — I don't know that she'll have me — I —"

"Poor Sir Cæsar!" exclaimed Miss Adair,

Adair, "Oh poor Sir Cæsar, what, she won't have you."

"You must *seize her* then," said Major Lethbridge.

"Very good, very good major," cried the Duke of Montolieu.

"Very good major," echoed Mr. Jones.

"Excellent advice for you, Sir Cæsar," said Miss Adair, "when you're acting with her, you can easily contrive to carry her off."

"But we've heard no account of the play yet," said Lethbridge, "what is it called—the Yorkshire Tragedy?"

"What a quizzing major you are," cried Sir Cæsar laughing, and looking round, inviting the company to join, "it's called 'The tomb of St. Agnes.'"

"Oh some dismal story;" said Miss Adair—"we must all be prepared with our white handkerchiefs, we must be deeply affected, I presume—"

"Yes," replied the baronet, "for Hawyet's to die on the stage."

"Is she to be poisoned?" enquired the Duchess of Montolieu.

"No,

"No, she's to stab herself."

"How barbarous!" drawled her grace.

"Then I'm to come in," continued Sir Cæsar.

"Oh you are to be the coroner?" said Major Lethbridge—"you're to sit upon the body—"

"No, I'm to be Alfonso, and I've a long speech to say over her, and—"

"Then pray, Fanny," said Lady Hillingdon to Miss Adair, "mind that I take my night-cap with me—"

"You are really too rude to Sir Cæsar," said Mrs. St. Clair, "I wouldn't tell them any more about it—"

"Oh I don't mind their quizzing," cried the baronet, "I like a joke—"

"You're quite in the right, Sir Cæsar, and pray," said Major Lethbridge, "is there to be any farce after Miss Yorke's bloody death?"

"Oh no, supper's to come after the play—and after supper dancing begins—"

"And that will be the best part of the evening," said Lady Helen St. Clair.

"There ought to be regular managers

appointed

appointed to conduct the *fête*," said Maria, "or there will be something omitted—how goes the bill of fare, let me see, the concert—fire-works, cards, theatricals, supper, and dancing, why it really surpasses a benefit night at Astley's."

"With such a variety of entertainments," said Lady Hillingdon, "it will be broad day, before it's all over—and if I stay it out, I sha'n't be home in time to dress for Mrs. Dorrington's dinner—"

"Mrs. Dorrington's dinner I fancy," said Mrs. St. Clair, "will go off rather flatly after the festivities of Villa-Yorke."

"How gay the Dorringtons have been this winter," observed Lady Hillingdon.

"To some purpose," said the Duke of Launceston, "for I understand one or two of the girls are going to be married—"

"And very soon," added Lady Hillingdon, "the eldest is engaged to Mr. Stewart, nephew to the Bishop of ——, and the next to my Lord Faulkner."

"Is it a good match for Miss Dorrington?" enquired Lady Jane St. Clair.

"The family are all very well pleased I hear," returned the countess, "Mr. Stewart has good expectations—and is so *very* amiable—and *such* a scholar!"

"Ah, just such a son-in-law as Mrs. Dorrington would select," observed the Duchess of Launceston, "My Lord Faulkner is a very fine young man."

"And a very pleasant fellow," said Major Lethbridge, the youngest Miss Dorrington too, I fancy is not without her admirer—you know Wortham of our regiment," continued he, turning to Miss St. Clair.

"I don't think there is any thing in that."

"Oh there was no fear of their marrying well," said Lady Charlotte Adair; "such *good* girls!—brought up under such an *excellent* mother."

"Who looks," said Major Lethbridge, "as if she had preach'd by times, 'Come when you're call'd, do as you're bid, shut the door after you, and never be chid.'"

"And that Miss O'Connor," drawled the Duchess of Launceston, "I suppose she's to be provided for too—she's another good girl."

"She's a very pretty girl," cried the Duke of Montolieu.

"So she is faith," added Mr. Jones.

"But who is she?" enquired Miss Adair, "I never can meet with any one that can tell me who she is."

"I know her to be of a most amiable disposition, and very accomplished," observed Miss St. Clair.

"She's not a fortune, I presume," said the Duke of Launceston, "or that circumstance would not have been omitted in your description."

"If she has no fawtune," cried Sir Cæsar, "I fear her accomplishments will not much avail her."

"If men only seek for a fortune," returned Miss St. Clair, "the woman is to be pitied who possesses one."

"But in this case," said Lady Jane St. Clair, "it's different — besides her want of fortune — her situation —"

"You know," said Lady Hillingdon hastily, when a man's to be married, of course he'd like to know who his wife is, and

and what sort of new brothers and sisters, and uncles, aunts and cousins he's to have—you know Major Lethbridge, he might find his father-in-law an old drummer!"

"And that would be rather *alarming*," returned the major.

"I must confess," returned Lady Hillingdon, "it strikes me, as rather singular, that Miss O'Connor should be brought into so much notice, without her connexions being known—"

"Unless it be for a matrimonial scheme," interrupted the Duchess of Launceston.

Mrs. St. Clair observed that she understood Miss O'Connor was a relation of Mrs. Lovell's.

"And Mrs. Lovell is—?"

"A most respectable woman, who had the superintendance of the Miss Dorringtons' education, and now continues with them as their friend."

"Ah, their governess," said Lady Helen, "Mrs. Dorrington's *treasure*."

"But however respectable Mrs. Lovell and her *protegée* may be," observed Lady Hil-

Hillingdon, " isn't it somewhat strange that this young lady should go every where with the Miss Dorringtons."

" Having lived so long together," said Miss St. Clair, " they're like sisters."

" But still it seems unnecessary," added Lady Hillingdon.

" Quite so in my opinion," drawled the Duchess of Launceston.

" For my part," said the Duke of Montolieu, " I think we ought to be all infinitely obliged to Mrs. Dorrington for presenting such an ornament to society."

" She certainly is pretty," said her Grace of Montolieu.

" That can't be denied," returned Lady Hillingdon, " and Lord Starfort last night seemed I thought to be very much of his grace's opinion."

" Oh his lordship's a general admirer of beauty," cried Lady Jane, " but Miss O'Connor seemed better pleased with the attentions of the Earl of Castlehayes."

" A higher title you know," said Miss Adair.

"An earl against a viscount is a safe bet any day," returned Major Lethbridge, "besides Castlehayes is a pleasanter man."

"She may consider herself very lucky if she gets either of them," said her Grace of Launceston.

"I sincerely wish her happy," exclaimed Miss St. Clair, "whoever has the good fortune to be united to her."

While Emily's situation was thus freely discussed, she herself was reflecting how Sir Philip's death might operate on the disposition of his son.

Perhaps, thought Emily, his independence will obliterate the memory of one so much beneath him; but no, I will not be so unjust to him—William's mind is noble, and above the mean considerations of birth.

Emily had not seen him since Sir Philip's death, and as she heard he was returned to Oxford, she feared it might be a long time before they again met—besides, it was reported that he was going abroad, and the thought, that he might possibly go without seeing her, struck her to the soul—"If he should

should —" exclaimed Emily, "I will no longer hope — till then, I will not distrust his love —" but as it is natural to doubt the realization of our dearest wishes, Emily could not entirely remove every suspicion, and by turns doubted the constancy of her lover, and assured herself of his affection.

Her anxiety, however, was in the evening greatly relieved by a letter from William. At an elegant supper at Lady Camleigh's, she was introduced to Mr. Temple, an Oxonian, who in the course of the evening found an opportunity of mentioning to her that he was at the same college as Sir William Aucherly.

Emily blushed, and said, "I have often heard him mention his friend Mr. Temple — You left him well I hope — Is it long since you have seen him."

"I only came from Oxford yesterday morning. Sir William is in very good health — but he has not yet recovered his usual spirits — I have a little commission from him," added Mr. Temple, with a sly smile and lowering his voice, continued, "he was